

IN THESE TIMES



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Doing
his job
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\$1.00

Left makes a deal

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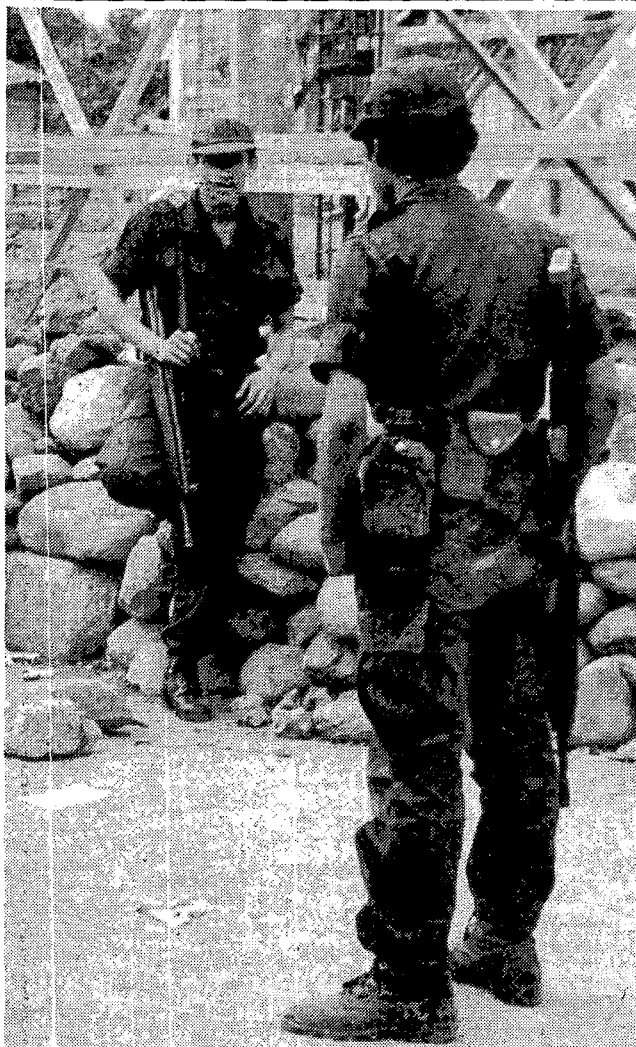
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Amtrak's 10-year struggle

THE INSIDE STORY



While the army said the journalists died under combat conditions, their bodies showed signs of being shot at close range.

The media got the message

By Nelson Santana

SAN SALVADOR

Although four Dutch journalists were killed between 5 and 6 p.m. on March 17, their bodies were not put on display for the international press assembled in a San Salvador morgue until the next evening. The members of the press ranged from \$60,000-a-year New York bigshots who were in the country for two days to \$3,000-a-year European freelancers who had been working the country for two years. Only the latter had even known Koos Koster and his three-man crew.

Like many of the long-term European journalists in Central America, Koster disdained gringos. So as more and more big U.S. newspaper and network people flooded into the Camino Real Hotel, Koster had faded back into his own small circle of Salvadoran sources and Europeans with their ears to the ground. But even his friends had difficulty recognizing him at the morgue. The prematurely silver hair that had been his trademark looked matted and browned under the klieg lights. His sharp features—something like a Dutch Gregory Peck—were now lumpy and coarse. According to one reporter, when they lifted Koster up, his features fell into their old form; evidently they had collapsed because there was little underneath them.

For all of the journalists assembled, the evening had its own double weight: first, as the major story of the week, and second, as an immediate reminder of their own mortality. In recent weeks the press had practically made a game out of travelling with the guerrillas. A recent issue of *Newsweek* showed a group of U.S. reporters posing in a guerrilla camp. It was generally agreed that one reason for Koster's death was his disregard for the warning he had received a week before from the Hacienda police when they arrested him for

suspicion of having guerrilla contacts. At that time, he should have known to flee the country. The other reason was symbolic: It was a warning to other, less vulnerable journalists from influential media in more powerful countries that they were getting out of hand. In El Salvador, since the onset of the "current disturbance," the display of mutilated cadavers—be it by the roadside, in the cathedral or in front of the town hall for "identification"—is meant to set an example.

The Dutch crew had made two previous attempts to follow through on their guerrilla contacts in Chalatenango. The first had been delayed by the Hacienda police after they discovered Koster's name and address in the pocket of a dead guerrilla in Usulután. He was questioned for five hours before signing a joint public statement with Colonel Francisco Morán, head of the Hacienda police. It said that Koster had not been mistreated by the police, that he had no guerrilla contacts and that his work would not be inhibited in the future. A second attempt to contact the guerrillas had failed several days later because no driver could be found to drop off the Dutchmen at their contact point. So at 3 p.m. on March 17, the Dutch crew, along with their two Salvadoran contacts, left their hotel. They arrived at their contact point near El Paraiso, Chalatenango, a little after 5:00 p.m. According to their driver, they had been followed for several kilometers by an armored Cherokee van—the vehicle favored by security forces and death squads—but it turned off the road before they reached their destination. The driver said he left the Dutch crew and the two contacts with a European who had joined the guerrilla forces as well as with three Salvadoran guerrillas. As he pulled away he watched them walk out of sight over a hill. He said the guerrillas were lightly armed.

A setup?

According to area residents, four army patrols had surrounded the contact point and were waiting for the group to arrive there. The driver left around 5:15 p.m. The journalists were dead before six. According to the official army report of the incident, a 40-minute battle ensued after the guerrillas attacked a patrol. But residents said that they heard only 10 to 20 minutes of gunfire from the zone. They also said army patrols were rarely stationed at that particular spot, and claimed that it was especially odd that they would be there just before dusk.

From the initial on-site investigation, it appears that two of the Dutch were killed walking up a hill toward two of the patrols. The others, wounded, apparently attempted to escape but ran into the fire of the other patrols waiting at the opposite side of the hill. According to the army's account, the journalists died under combat conditions, but all their bodies had multiple wounds and showed signs of being shot at close range. One had been shot in the knees—a difficult feat with a running target—and another through the hand. Furthermore, their bodies had apparently been stripped and then partially reclothed before being brought to the capitol.

Six bodies were exhibited: the four Dutchmen, the unidentified European—presumably a combatant—and a Salvadoran identified by the driver as one of the contacts. The army said three guerrillas had been buried in Chalatenango. (A TV crew that had travelled up north to film the burial had its cameras confiscated.) Even so, at this time no one has satisfactorily explained the disappearance of one of the Salvadorans who reportedly was at the scene.

The killings happened during a week when the capitol

was seething with rumors about impending events, ranging from a right-wing coup to a major offensive from the left. They are a clear sign that the Salvadoran authorities mean to tighten the noose on remaining sources of contact with government opposition. In fact, the Dutchmen's deaths set off a chain of events that accomplished just that. The day after the bodies arrived, a Brazilian TV crew was shot at by government troops as it cruised the countryside. That same day, an ABC crew was detained and questioned at length by heavily armed plainclothesmen identifying themselves as the national police. Then on Sunday, March 21, Archbishop Rivera y Damas decried the deaths of the journalists and defended their right to cover both sides of the Salvadoran conflict. That night a bomb rocked the Archbishop's office, which is only a few blocks from the U.S. Embassy—one of the most heavily guarded parts of town.

But the most ominous development dealt with a group of Salvador's more than 500 political prisoners, some of whom had been secretly interviewed by Koster and his crew sometime before their deaths. Following Koster's death, military authorities made a thorough search of the bodies, vehicle and hotel rooms of the four and discovered film and tape from the interviews, including one with Antonio Morales Caronell, the 23-year-old son of junta member Jose Antonio Morales Ehrlich. His son was captured and imprisoned in May 1981 for his membership in the FPL (Popular Liberation Forces) guerrilla organization. Also included were interviews with three directors of Stecel—El Salvador's largest independent labor union—who were imprisoned during a work stoppage in August 1980 and have been held without a trial ever since.

On Thursday, March 18, at 8:30 a.m.—14 hours after the deaths of the Dutch but 10 hours before they were announced and confirmed—a combined army and Hacienda police force reportedly entered Mariona prison, where political prisoners are held. According to sources, several of the prisoners were beaten with gun butts. Morales told members of his family that he was beaten and injected with a drug that made him vomit. He has been hospitalized and at the time of this writing was reportedly listed in grave condition.

According to friends of the family, Morales is under heavy guard; the whereabouts of the other assaulted prisoners remains unknown. Mariona Prison Director Alfredo Rodriguez Moran maintains that all of the political prisoners in his custody are in good health, but so far no journalists have been able to cut through the red tape and get to talk to them.

Nelson Santana reports regularly for *In These Times* on Central American affairs.

Brother, can you spare \$10,000?

So far, more than 900 readers have contributed \$25,000 during our current fundraising drive. We thank those of you who have made a contribution and encourage those of you who haven't to do so as soon as possible. We're approaching our original goal of \$35,000 but "having almost what we need" won't satisfy the post office or our suppliers. Another \$10,000 must be raised in the next three to four weeks to offset the 100 percent increase in our mailing rates and the skyrocketing costs in the publishing industry. With your help we can keep *In These Times* financially viable and politically effective.

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IN THESE TIMES

Is GM taking autoworkers for a ride?

By David Moberg

FIGURING IT WAS THE BEST they could do in bad times, many autoworkers have resignedly accepted the contract already approved at Ford and now before General Motors workers. But critics, in and outside the union, maintain that the United Auto Workers (UAW) had alternatives that they could and should have pursued.

Representing a traditional, class-conscious militancy, the Canadian division of the union and the Locals Opposed to Concessions (LOC) movement contend that givebacks are unnecessary, yield nothing for workers and ultimately destroy the union. The auto industry's problems lie with government economic policies and management decisions, they say, and workers should not pay since they—and their wages—are not responsible.

But another line of attack argues that even if concessions are granted, the union should take advantage of the industry's hard times to gain solid job guarantees and more power from shop floor to board of directors over corporate investment and worklife. Moreover, since management incompetence is a central cause of auto industry problems, as MIT auto expert Harley Shaiken argues, that should be a focus of union bargaining. If there's a case for concessions, it's against managerial dunderheads.

Instead, the UAW has opted for what could be labeled a Japanese-style industry: management retains full control but opens itself to consultation and cooperation with the union. A core of workers gain income security (although little is done on job guarantees) and workers are expected to be mobile and follow the flow of investment and subject to greater discretionary power of management in the factory.

To win something more, the union would have had to risk a strike. But leaders judged that the deep slump and potential large inventories of some models made a strike impossible. Critics maintain that the companies desperately need a good start on the model year and would have been vulnerable in the fall despite the hard times.

GM showed it was willing to fight rough when, following breakdown of earlier talks because of strong opposition to concessions, it closed seven plants and part of many other operations. Arm-twisting by international union representatives, approval of the Ford contract and "the scare tactics and holding of our plants hostage," in the words of Pontiac, Mich., union official Ron Miller, beat back earlier resistance to early negotiations.

To contend with such scare tactics, the union would have had to be ready to occupy closed plants, stage massive public protests and generally take their case into the public arena to battle the popular image—unfortunately bolstered by concessions—that autoworkers' wages are the villain in the piece.

A Ford-style package.

Instead, UAW negotiators settled on a Ford-style package—a wage freeze for two-and-one-half years, deferment of cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) in the first three quarters, abandonment of job-creating paid personal holidays, no COLA for pensioners—that will cost GM workers close to \$3 billion. At Ford, which lost over \$1 billion last year, such concessions could be seen as relief for a troubled company. But GM made a small profit last year (bolstered by non-operating gains and reduced by overseas losses) and was expected by most analysts to make \$1-\$1.5 billion in profit this year and around \$2.5 billion next year even without the new contract.

The only justification for concessions,

other than fear of losing more later, could be the *quid pro quo*. But the trade-off is unimpressive.

GM's profit-sharing plan, which would have yielded shares in the range of \$350 to \$700 in the late '70s, is based on a formula that offers roughly one-third less than what the Ford formula would have.

GM made only vague promises to restrain outsourcing and pledged not to close plants directly related to outsourcing for two years (but closings for other grounds are permitted and even the outsourcing prohibition could be circumvented).

10 percent of production workers and further intensify pressures in the workplace, rather than alleviate oppressive auto working conditions, a more positive approach to reducing absenteeism.

Although the pact is presented as saving jobs—for example, the 6,000 or so at the four plants GM offered to reopen—the elimination of the Paid Personal Holidays (PPH) will cost about 12,000 GM jobs.

Militant opponents, like Kelly, who calls the GM contract "the most treasonable act I've seen in the modern history of the American labor movement," wanted

gues. "The problem is what was given in return by the corporation. The concessions were not accompanied by sufficient winning of power by the union at the workplace, on the price of automobiles and in guarantees of job security. Unions, if they're going to save companies, have a right to a determination of their investment policy, the most important element in job security."

"Whenever employees give back, they are now investors," work expert and former unionist Robert Schrank argues. "They own whatever percentage is given back. That is the big change that the la-

Q. WHAT IS SMALLER, HAS FEWER EXTRAS, IS MADE IN DETROIT, AND IS EXPECTED TO GO FARTHER ON LESS THAN IT USED TO?...

A. AN AUTO WORKER'S PAYCHECK!!



© 82
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Like Ford, the GM Guaranteed Income Stream provides at least half of the final pay of any laid-off worker with 15 years seniority (10 years, in the GM terms, for victims of plant closings), but the guarantee has a hitch: to remain eligible an employee must be willing to move wherever the company wants. A four-plant experiment in lifetime employment for 80 percent of current employees provides for modification of the contract, something LOC claims "suggests the danger of a bidding war of local against local to see which plants are willing to work cheapest to get job guarantees." The contract permits any local to agree to modifications of the national agreement to prevent outsourcing, an invitation to management destruction of the contract.

Many local union leaders are more worried about erosion of their local contracts under this agreement than about the national contract concessions. GM can insist on opening talks on local agreements, and if no settlement is reached in 60 days the corporation and the international union can intervene. Ford has already extracted many local agreement concessions, and GM has proposals on the table that would drastically reduce the control workers have over their working conditions. "They're after the locals that have fairly decent agreements and they're out to diminish them," LOC leader Pete Kelly said. Shaiken agrees: "What happens at the local level may ultimately prove to be more important than the national agreement."

Likewise, an absentee control plan that docks benefits for high absenteeism, whether excused or not, could affect around

the union to extend the current contract for a year and wait for better times.

They argue that the solution to auto industry problems is not to be found in giving up past gains. For example, the Japanese advantage of \$750 a car (the UAW's estimate is half the figure commonly accepted) would be greatly reduced if high interest rates did not overvalue the dollar compared to the yen. Also, despite frequent Japanese superiority in management and technology, American autoworkers were still 12 percent more productive than the Japanese in 1980 according to UAW figures. Finally, the concessions will do virtually nothing to stimulate sales. They are really ransom payments against the threat, still not under control, of plant closings, outsourcing and further corporate flight overseas.

But even if the problems are not the workers' faults and if concessions are, however unfairly, defended as temporary relief, critics say that the UAW has not received what it deserves in return. American Motors workers, for example, have been pressing—against resistance of the international union—for solid guarantees on where new products will be made, prohibition of outsourcing, controls on investment and contractual local content standards (guaranteeing a specific percentage of the new Renault Alliance to be built in the U.S.) as their price for \$150 million in future wage concessions that the company would repay at 10 percent interest.

"Concessions are not inevitably a betrayal," University of California social science professor Stanley Aronowitz ar-

bor movement has not even begun to think about. If you accept that assumption, as a stockholder I have a right to say how the company is run."

Most big firms are in trouble because of their mismanagement, Schrank argues, and workers can prevent many of their errors. "Unions should stop teaching shop steward courses on how to file grievances and start teaching courses on how to run the company," he says. "If you ever want worker participation and worker management, they've got to start learning how to run the place."

Although Donald Ephlin, the UAW vice-president for Ford, talks of the union playing a greater role in management, the picture he painted in an *Automotive News* interview was not of worker control but a Japanese-style of close cooperation between the company and the national union with an exchange of information at all levels. He saw twice-yearly presentations to the Ford board as almost as good as a board seat, which he saw not as a step toward greater worker control but as a means "to have input and receive information."

Likewise, he hoped to make it easier for autoworkers to move to new jobs, as opposed to winning union control over auto investment funds that could be spent in traditional auto areas on new industries, such as the energy-related projects in the *Rational Reindustrialization* plan for Detroit.

By failing to fight for power in the corporation, the UAW contract exacted a small return for the workers' concessions, paying a price autoworkers should never have had to pay.

IN SHORT

We are there

Mike Wallace recently reported on CBS-TV that, despite official assurances to the contrary, U.S. military personnel have been meddling in Nicaragua. "In Short" checked with Saul Landau, a Fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies, who filled in some of the details disclosed by government sources: Early this year, several former and still-active Special Forces officers (a.k.a. Green Berets) were approached by military higher-ups. Their new mission, they were told, was to slip into Nicaragua by parachute and carry out sabotage missions. They would execute their secret maneuvers in seven-man teams called "Bond groups"—presumably named after James Bond, Agent 007—whose formation had been authorized by President Reagan.

Besides the catchy nomenclature, other incentives were apparently offered to these skilled assassins and saboteurs. One man approached by the military talent scouts, currently a civilian policeman, was promised \$50,000 for six months' work, along with "an insurance policy that would cover his family for a lifetime in case of an accident." He was also told that his family—after being sworn to secrecy, of course—would be able to visit him occasionally at neutral sites.

According to Landau, a sensitive Defense Department source has confirmed that Nicaragua was the Bond groups' prime target, but would not rule out their use in Cuba as well. It has not been disclosed whether the Bond groups participated in the March 14 bombings of two bridges in northeast Nicaragua.

Haigonomics

When the *Washington Post* excerpted the minutes from Secretary of State Alexander Haig's staff meetings, the secretary's comments on foreign policy got all the attention. But a remark Haig made at a July 8, 1981, meeting seems to mark a significant departure from the Reagan administration's economic thinking.

"Let the private sector do it" is the Republican catchword and slogan when it doesn't want to spend money," the *Post* quotes Haig as saying. Recalling his earlier experience as the head of United Technologies Corp., Haig says the "private sector is fed up," adding that there's a need to set up a "government apparatus" that the private sector "will follow if it is there."

According to *In These Times* associate editor John Judis, Haig's comments expose a persistent undercurrent of support among corporation heads for a conservative form of economic planning—support that was evident in the strong corporate backing of John Connally's 1980 campaign. The question is whether such sentiment will ever infect the rest of the administration, whose free-market heart remains dead-set against it.

Dearth and taxes

Another blow to Reaganomics: While volunteerism is talked up in Washington as a free-market alternative to the public funding of social services, it has been given the boot in Wayne, Ill. Jay Walljasper reports that this little community (pop. 950) northwest of Chicago had long been considered a supply-sider's dream—a town with no taxes. Most of the streets are privately owned, septic tanks take the place of a public sewer system and, for many years, police protection was funded by voluntary contributions.

But in recent years the generosity of Wayne's civic-minded citizens has been declining. Since 1978, for example, the proportion of residents making the suggested \$225 yearly contribution toward city services has slipped from 80 percent to 60 percent. And so—like volunteerism's big booster in the White House—Wayne officials have found themselves facing a mounting budget deficit. Their solution, based on an un-Reaganlike decision that taxes are preferable to cutting services, was to propose a local property tax. On March 16, Wayne's voters approved the tax by a three-to-one margin.

Two from the heartless

• According to the *Seattle Times* (via PNS Radio), the head of the Selective Service System thinks the current penalties for failing to register for the draft may be too harsh and has hinted that the administration may reduce them. Young men who failed to sign up by the Feb. 28 deadline now face up to five years in jail and a \$10,000 fine. But draft director Thomas Turnage says the administration is looking at a proposal to reduce the offense from a felony to a misdemeanor with a maximum penalty of \$200 and no jail term. Turnage admits it would be impossible to prosecute the estimated 900,000 nonregistrants running loose, but predicts the first prosecutions will bring a big up-surge in late sign-ups.

• According to the *Nation's Health*, a new survey of medical costs has revealed that the government spends more money subsidizing health care for wealthy and middle-class Americans than it does for the poor. The study says that, while the poor receive an estimated \$45 billion a year in Medicare and Medicaid payments, the government loses more than \$50 billion to upper-income citizens who take medical deductions and get tax breaks on health plan payments.

—Josh Kornbluth



A scene from Public Media Center's OSHA: What's "highly inflammatory" about this picture?

Talk of workers may be hazardous to your films

SAN FRANCISCO—In California, March is traditionally Hollywood's month for all the hype and snipe of the Academy Awards. But this month the Bay Area hosted its own film gala—the "Banned by Reagan Film Festival."

There were no long lines of chauffeur-driven limousines, blinding spotlights and red carpets. There were, however, more than 500 unionists and their supporters crowding into the San Francisco Palace of Fine Arts to see three films on workplace hazards—all meant to be distributed by OSHA—that the Reagan administration had pulled the plug on, branding them "anti-management" and halting their distribution by OSHA's regional offices.

In an inter-office memo leaked to the press, Jim Foster, OSHA's director of information, argued unsuccessfully for a more moderate form of censorship: "To show that we are thoughtful, not singleminded and not wasteful, I believe we should seek a decision that retains at least one and, more desirably, two of the films. Using one of the films will show that we are not obstinate but discriminating. All but the most activist viewers would agree that the other two films are highly inflammatory."

Festival viewers had trouble locating highly inflammatory qualities in any of the three 30-minute documentaries. Was Studs Terkel's narration the problem? Was it the music of Oscar Brand? Or was it the films' thoughtful, engrossing documentation of the hazards to which working people are exposed?

• Public Media Center's OSHA provides clear explanation of how the Occupational Safety and Health Administration was formed and how it can work with both unions and management to reduce workplace health hazards.

• Durrin Films' *Can't Take No More* chronicles the development of safety laws and shows

why they need to be enforced—steelworkers losing limbs because job hazards were not explained to them, male lab workers becoming impotent and growing breasts when exposed to the drug DES, poultry workers losing fingers when their hands become so numb in the freezers that they can hardly feel the carving blades.

• *Worker to Worker*, also produced by Durrin Films, shows how workers can improve their working conditions—through direct worker-management negotiation, use of OSHA or the National Institute of Safety and Health, formation of union health and safety committees, lawsuits by individuals.

Recently President Reagan said he was "not very happy about the industry that I used to be in...and the type of pictures today. I liked it better when the actors kept their clothes on." Judging from the "Banned by Reagan Film Festival," the president also prefers it when the workers keep their mouths shut.

—Mike Berkowitz
(SEIU Local 535)

All three films are available from the Public Media Center, 25 Scotland St., San Francisco, CA 94133.

Speaking with forked wallets

A fundraising letter is going out this month from the Democratic Study Group (DSG). According to the letter, signed by former Iowa Senator John Culver, Democrats in 1982 "will need millions more than in any previous election. This is why DSG has launched a national drive to create an army of small givers to offset the thousands of wealthy Republicans who will give \$1,000, \$5,000 and \$10,000 to the GOP effort to take the House."

The letter argues that the Republicans won in 1980 because

their campaign chests were fuller. "The biggest advantage the Republicans have is money," the letter states. "In 1980, the Republican House and Senate campaign committees outspent their Democratic counterparts 13 to one—\$47.8 million to \$3.7 million."

It's true that Republican congressional committees outspent their Democratic counterparts in 1980. And for the 1982 election, the Republican committees have already raised \$75 million to only \$12.2 million for the Democrats—a six-to-one margin. But two other assertions made by the letter are false:

• According to the *National Journal's* survey of party fundraising, "The House GOP committee receives 95 percent of its money from small contributors, and the Senate Committee about 50 percent," while the Democratic groups "depend primarily on contributions from large donors." The House GOP has a fundraising list of 1.3 million regular donors. The Democratic group boasts 40,000 names.

• In seven of the nine major House and Senate contests in 1980 where a Republican conservative upset a Democratic incumbent, the Democrat outspent the Republican. This is in addition to the substantial financial advantages in name recognition and mail privileges that accrue from incumbency.

For instance, in South Dakota's Senate race, Republican James Abdnor spent \$1,675,430 to defeat Democratic incumbent George McGovern, who spent \$3,237,669, or almost \$10 a voter. In California's 21st District, Republican Bobbi Fiedler spent \$560,492 to defeat incumbent Democrat James Corman, who spent \$905,231. In Indiana's Third District, Republican John P. Hiler spent \$407,979 to defeat incumbent Democrat John Brademas, who spent \$744,068.

The only conservative Republican who could remotely be accused of buying an election was Jack Fields, who spent \$794,870 in Texas' Eighth District to defeat incumbent Bob Eckhardt, who spent \$457,630. In the other cases, Republicans must have had some other advantage.

—John Judis

POLITICS

On the left, a match made in Detroit

By John Judis

DETROIT

ONE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL mergers in American politics took place in 1901, when the American Socialist Party was formed from the Socialist Democracy of America, the remnants of Eugene Debs' American Railway Union and a dissident faction of the Socialist Labor Party. The Socialists more or less grew steadily for their first 18 years. But in 1919, with the climactic split between Socialists and Communists, the American left became a descending flow chart of Communists, Socialist, Social Democrats, Trotskyists and Maoists, of the day on the American left. Two of the larger socialist organizations, the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC) and the New American Movement (NAM), with about 7,000 members between them, decided to tie the knot. "We have been socialists, communists, Fabians, social democrats, Trotskyists, liberals, Marxists, anarchists, SDSers, social gospel Protestants, Zionist Jews and Bundist Jews, Catholics who believed all socialists were enemies of religion and atheists who believed all Catholics were reactionaries. We are now an exuberant movement glorying in our diverse modes of interpreting the common socialist values which are basic to our moral and political community," Michael Harrington, the chair of the newly formed Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), told the 300 delegates gathered under the shadow of economic depression in Detroit's St. Andrew's Hall.

Among the delegates, there were varying estimates of the merger's historic significance. "I am sure historians will forget that the Republican Party had its convention in Detroit in 1980, but they will never forget that democratic socialism was born here," said Mildred Jeffrey, the former president of the National Women's Political Caucus.

Jim Chapin, former DSOC National Secretary, was not as certain of the merger's historic role. "The desirability of the merger is so obvious by now that it is not exciting," he said. "It means that democratic socialists now have hegemony on the narrow left."

But Chapin believes that if DSA can continue to grow during the '80s—both organizations have roughly doubled their membership in the last three years—DSA will be well situated to play a leading role if a massive left movement does develop in the late '80s or early '90s. "Just think if a 20,000 member socialist organization like this had existed in 1960," he said.

Difficult negotiations.

The first item on the convention agenda was the dissolution of the old organizations and the separate ratification of the new one. DSOC and NAM gathered in separate rooms. DSOC's meeting was perfunctory. Embarrassed by their conflicting emotions, DSOC's middle-aged leaders, who had already suffered their share of splits and splinters, offered a quick resolution and a rendition of the *Internationale*. NAM's finale resembled the last moments of a '60s commune, with tributes, tears and raised fists.

But once the organizations had dissolved into each other, it was hard to tell the individuals apart. While expected differences in style remained, political differences and similarities cut across the old organizational lines.

When the merger talks were first initiated by DSOC at its March 1979 convention, the two organizations appeared to be far apart. DSOC had been founded in 1973 by a part of the Socialist Party dissatisfied with the Party's subordination to AFL-CIO President George Meany's cold war liberalism. Harrington, Irving Howe and Victor Reuther were still well-equipped to operate politically within labor and the Democratic Party's

higher circles, but they had had a history of bitter conflict with many of the movements of the '60s.

NAM was founded in 1971 by veterans of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), and the anti-war, civil rights and women's movements. Many of its early members were suspicious of unions and electoral politics. At the 1972 convention, one New York chapter tried to expel another because one of its members was working on Bella Abzug's Democratic congressional race. If it had ties to the past, they were to American communism rather than socialism, through the participation of former leaders like Dorothy Healey, head of the Communist Party in

Southern California, who was expelled for her opposition to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. Befitting its anti-war past and Communist lineage, many NAM members viewed the Soviet Union, Vietnam and Cuba with varying degrees of "critical support" and looked askance at DSOC's membership in the Socialist International.

But by 1979, DSOC's leaders were actively courting the survivors of the '60s movements, and NAM members had begun to re-evaluate their opposition to both unions and the Democratic Party. When DSOC's proposal was made, it prompted only about 15 percent of both organization's active members to set up opposition caucuses. But the negotiations still took three years to complete. "Putting NAM and DSOC together was difficult," said former NAM Political Director Holly Graff. "It was hard to discuss politics because even when we agreed, we'd use different language."

In most of the sticky political questions, NAM finally agreed to DSOC's formulations. This was partly a result of NAM's changing views and partly a result of being "less passionate," in Graff's words, about certain foreign policy issues. With the Soviet Union threatening to crush Poland's Solidarity movement,

NAM agreed with DSOC that countries like the USSR were not "socialist" because they were not democratic. With the Socialist International openly backing El Salvador's Democratic Revolutionary Front, NAM dropped its opposition to membership in the International. There was no longer any general disagreement between the organizations about working within the Democratic Party or feminism.

Only the question of Israel and the PLO prompted a compromise based on DSOC's passionate insistence. The final document affirms the Palestinian right to self-determination without mentioning the PLO and supports American military aid to Israel. (Ironically, NAM's support for Israel's right to exist and for recognition of the PLO as a legitimate partner in negotiations was more in line with the Socialist International's position.)

The structural negotiations between the organizations represented more of a compromise. NAM had originally restricted its membership to chapter activists, while DSOC was open to anyone willing to pay a nominal fee. While DSOC had more members, the number of active members was about the same. Since 1979, NAM had moved toward DSOC's looser structure, but in the negotiations it insisted on setting up and funding regional offices that would oversee local chapter development. NAM also won DSOC's agreement to adopt a new name and structure for the organization rather than simply incorporating NAM into DSOC.

National and local activity.

Both NAM and DSOC are what political scientists call "elite" organizations. Their members are primarily college-educated, drawn from the staff and leadership of unions rather than from the rank-and-file, and from city councils and public interest organizations rather than block clubs and parishes. Reflecting the legacy of the '60s, both organizations are also predominantly white.

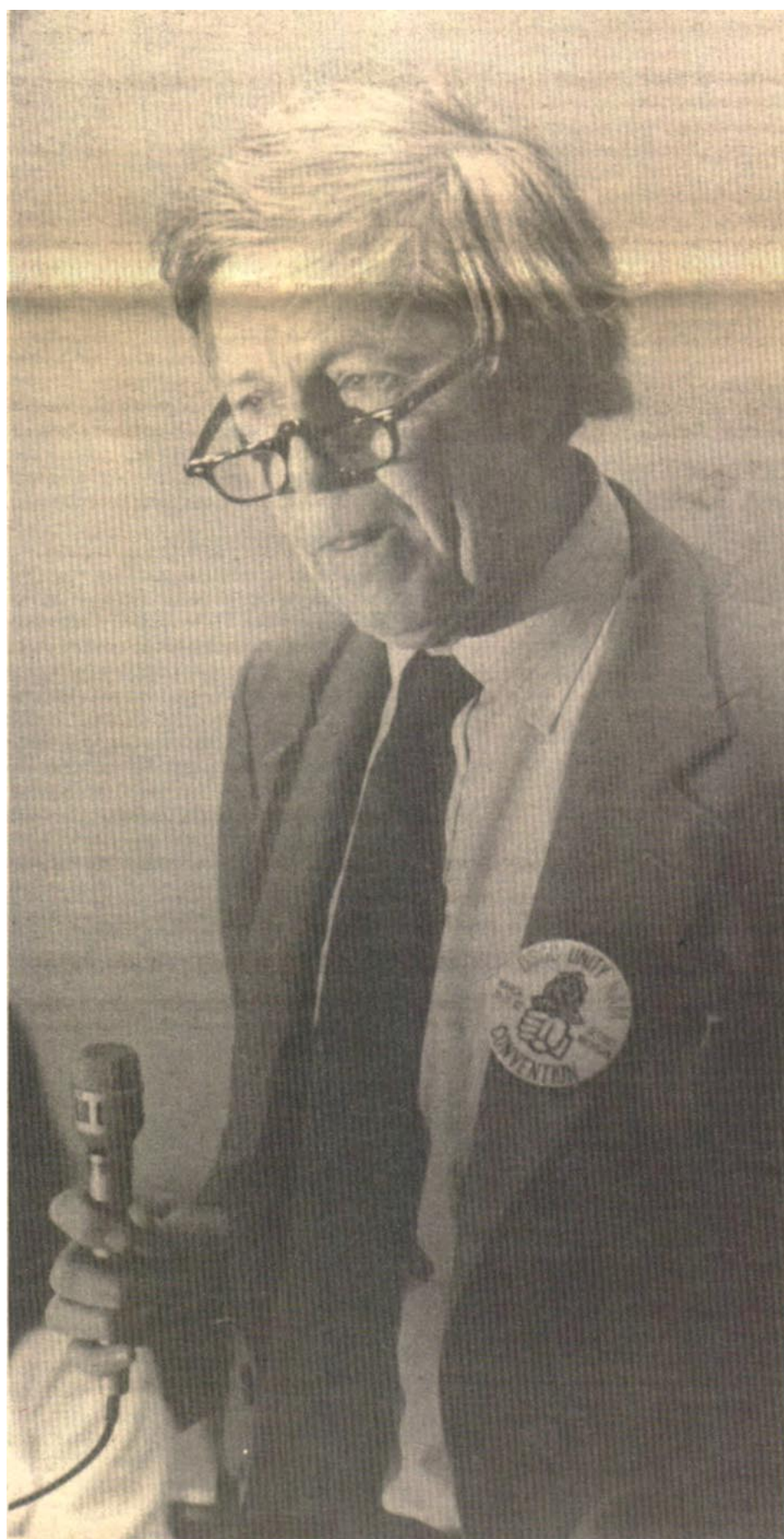
DSOC's main achievement in the last three years has been the growth of its youth section, which now numbers 1,500. It played a major role in campus draft opposition and is now helping to organize the April 6 Washington demonstration against student aid cuts. Jim Chapin even described DSOC as having become "predominantly a youth group."

The record of DSOC's city-based locals has been spotty. In the East, where most of DSOC's membership was concentrated, locals have set up labor-Democratic Party coalitions like Rhode Island's Citizen/Labor Organizing Committee and the Long Island Progressive Coalition. But no DSOC local has its own office, and few have hired an organizer except to arrange annual fundraising dinners.

NAM chapters, always strongest in the Midwest and the West Coast, have become active in citizen action and community organizations and in local electoral elections. In Pittsburgh, NAM helped set up and now helps staff the Pennsylvania Alliance for Jobs and Energy. In Santa Cruz, Calif., NAM boasts the city's mayor, Michael Rotkin, who ran as a socialist with chapter support. But NAM has still not developed any national programs, and its members still seem prey to a certain grassroots localism.

DSOC's national activity, which was expected to complement NAM's chapter work, has also run aground recently. Its main program, the Democratic Agenda, was set up at the 1976 Democratic convention to provide a vehicle for labor and liberals to fight for a left-wing platform. But while it played an important role at the 1976 convention and the 1978 midterm convention, it folded back into DSOC afterward rather than assuming a life of its own. At the 1980 convention, Democratic Agenda's platform efforts were completely overshadowed by the

"Historians will never forget that democratic socialism was born here," said one delegate.



Michael Harrington, head of the newly formed Democratic Socialists of America: "We are now an exuberant movement..."

David Vobez

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Left

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Carter-Kennedy nomination battle. And now with Democratic rule changes eliminating issues debate at the midterm convention and limited elected delegates role in 1984, the Democratic Agenda strategy appears to have been undermined.

While its problems might be explained by unfortunate accidents like the Carter-Kennedy imbroglio, their source may be deeper. DSOC's strategy assumed that a left-wing realignment in the Democratic Party could occur among the party's elites and then spread downward. But the party itself now appears to be ossifying, leaving politics in the hands of ambitious individuals and independent political action committees.

Will to boredom.

For fear of undoing three years of negotiations, both the NAM and DSOC leaders wanted to avoid any serious debates at the Detroit convention. Many of the speeches were either predictable exhortations to take sword in hand against the Reagan administration or self-congratulatory panegyrics. The delegates showed the greatest enthusiasm when two representatives of El Salvador's Democratic Revolutionary Front made brief statements of solidarity. NAM member and newly elected DSA Executive Board member Stanley Aronowitz complained of a "will to bore-

dom" that seemed to have seized hold of the convention convenors. "The problem is that this outfit doesn't know what it wants to do beyond international affairs," he said.

But during Sunday morning workshops on feminism, labor and the future of the Democratic Agenda, some of the questions facing DSA were aired. In the well-attended labor workshop, DSA members differed on how DSA should relate to the labor movement. In the past, DSOC, which could claim the presidents of the Machinists and AFSCME and several United Auto Workers (UAW) vice-presidents as members, tried to unite labor in political coalitions and to avoid internal labor issues. NAM members, typified by Southern California UAW activist Paul Schrade, focused on union democracy and shop-floor militance. At the labor workshop, several former DSOC members shared Schrade's concerns. "Our old approach has been alliances at the top and support work," one DSOC member said. "But most militant workers reject the DSOC approach. Our problem is to reach workers who are not opposed to DSA politics, but who are opposed to the traditional approach."

The difference in approaches was dramatized when DSOC, at its Debs-Thomas dinner in Detroit the night before the convention, presented UAW Secretary-Treasurer Ray Majerus with an award. For some of the NAM and DSOC members, DSOC's gesture amounted to an endorsement of the recent givebacks that Majerus helped to negotiate.

At the Democratic Agenda workshop, delegates discussed how DSA's socialism



DSA executive board member Richard Healey (foreground, left) warned, "We can't canvass for socialism."

will relate to its public politics. In the past, DSOC has operated as socialists within the Democratic Agenda, but has sought to make it a coalition based upon support for such measures as full employment legislation, national health insurance and a federal energy corporation.

Several delegates didn't see why Democratic Agenda itself could not become socialist. "For us in Dane County there's no problem in being a socialist," said a Madison, Wis., delegate. But other delegates expressed some concern about this approach. "In most towns in Ohio, you'd be out of a job if you are a publicly identified socialist," remarked an Ohio city council member, who is himself a closet socialist.

Gordon Haskell, a veteran of the old Socialist Party who will be DSA's new political director, put the problem in strategic terms. "Our goal isn't just to take over the Democratic Party for socialism," Haskell said. "You have to get labor people and their constituency to take over the Democratic Party, not just scattered middle-class people. The point of the Democratic Agenda is to bring this strategy to bear."

In the feminism workshop, many delegates advocated making support for "reproductive rights" a point of unity in Democratic Agenda as well as DSA. In the past, DSOC leaders had feared that such insistence on abortion rights would drive out the Catholic left.

The socialist agenda.

A more basic political question underlies these different strategic debates within DSA: How can DSA, still an alarmingly small political organization, create a socialist movement in a country where most people view socialism with distrust, incomprehension and even alarm? In the past DSOC's strategy has been to legitimize socialism by getting notables to identify themselves as socialists. During the convention, Rep. George Crockett (D-Mich.) joined DSA's gallery of stars. DSOC also published pamphlets and sent the indefatigable Harrington on speaking tours in order to popularize the idea of socialism. But its principal political activities have been aimed at building what Harrington calls a "democratic left."

NAM was initially much more optimistic than DSOC about "putting socialism on the agenda," but in a reappraisal that took place in the mid-'70s, it adopted a dual strategy of winning intellectual converts to socialism through forums and socialist schools while aiming to build what NAM members called an "anti-corporate movement" through their organizing around immediate issues.

While some DSA members believe that the failure of the Republican right will open vast opportunities for public socialism, most DSA leaders are skeptical. According to DSOC youth organizer Penny Schantz, even students have been afraid to identify themselves as socialists. "There is a resurgent McCarthyism on campuses," Schantz said. "Students are worried about whether being a member of a socialist organization will hurt their careers."

At the same time, most DSA members don't share the view of Harry Boyte that they would have been better off identify-

Afraid of undoing three years of negotiations, both NAM and DSOC leaders avoided serious debates.

ing themselves with a "pluralism of idioms" rather than with socialism. While they are generally sympathetic to the citizen action network's general anti-corporate focus and to Tom Hayden's Campaign for Economic Democracy, they insist that there must still be an explicit socialist organization if there is ever to be socialism in America.

DSA leaders are therefore faced with a strategic dilemma. One proposal, put forth by *In These Times* editor James Weinstein, has been to begin running socialists in Democratic primaries for legislative offices. While most DSA leaders agree that this is desirable, they doubt it is practical except in special cases, because it would separate DSA from its coalition partners.

Newly elected executive board member Richard Healey commented, "There is no mass base now for a socialist proposal. Candidates can only get elected as non-socialists—as radical reformers or as single-issue candidates."

Healey thinks that a division of labor will continue to exist between a socialist organization like DSA and the citizen action and community organizations that build local alliances from the bottom-up. "We can't do what they do. We can't canvass for socialism," Healey said.

Healey rejected the proposal made by some former NAM and DSOC members that the Democratic Agenda, which has been a coalition at the top, should become a mass-based organization. "We can't be the people who activate a mass base. It must activate itself," Healey said.

His view is similar to that of Jim Chapin, who was also elected to DSA's executive board. DSA will remain an "elite" organization that recruits members on ideological grounds. With the continuing failure of centrist Democrats and right-wing Republicans to solve the nation's economic problems, it will be able to win increasing numbers of recruits from among those policymakers and local political and union leaders looking for a coherent alternative to neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism, but it will be unable to play an active political role as a socialist political organization until its membership grows considerably and until a mass left opposition—a "democratic left"—exists in the U.S.

Some DSA members don't share Healey's view that being socialist will necessarily limit DSA's mass membership composition. Some members also think there will be greater opportunities for socialist politics, but they will probably have to prove their point through actual successes before it will become DSA's plan of action for the '80s.

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ITALY

By Diana Johnstone

ROME

THE ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY's (PCI) decisive break with Moscow over Poland is the most spectacular part of an effort to adjust the party's alliances both at home and abroad so as best to withstand the troubles besetting the left and labor movements not only in Italy but also throughout Europe. For despite socialist electoral victories in France and Greece, the political parties and unions that make up the European working class movement continue to be undermined by capitalist economic restructuring, which is fragmenting the working class and reducing the size and political weight of traditional organized labor.

The PCI is a dangerously aging party. Some 80 percent of its 1,700,000 members are over age 40 and half are over 60. The fading far left, which a few years ago drew youth away from the PCI, has proved unable to provide a comparable political initiation to new generations that are tending to turn away from politics altogether. Thus, to shore up and broaden the working class movement, PCI leaders need to seek alliances in two directions: with European social democracy and with those new movements—women's liberation, ecology, nuclear disarmament—most able to involve young people.

Secretary General Enrico Berlinguer's announcement of a "third phase" of the working-class movement portrays the PCI's present situation as a crossroads rather than a dead end. This is Gramscian "optimism of the will," as "pessimism of the intellect" is warning that failure of democratic political forces to master the current economic crisis is setting the stage for unpredictable irrational movements, social catastrophe and war.

According to Berlinguer, two historic phases in the search for socialism have now run their course. The first produced social democratic parties that achieved some important improvements in workers' conditions, but did not challenge private capitalist ownership of industry, whose current reorganization of the economy is tearing down the foundations of the social democratic welfare state. The second opened with the October Revolution and showed its "exhaustion" with the repression of democratic renewal in Poland. After these first two phases, or ways, opens a third phase, or "third way" toward socialism, which unlike the first must overcome capitalism and unlike the second must preserve and develop democracy.

Whatever they think of this analysis, many Communists, especially in positions of responsibility, are relieved or even exhilarated to be cut loose from the Soviets. But the future is extremely unclear. Day after day in PCI meetings at every level all over Italy, the "third way" is being debated at length. Some old workers still venerate Stalin as the hero who defeated fascism in World War II. They are not going to change their opinion, but neither are they likely to do much about it. The more widespread objections to the new course do not stem from any attachment to the "Soviet model," but rather from economic discontent and, above all, from belief that the USSR, for all its manifest faults, is the only barrier to U.S. imperialism.

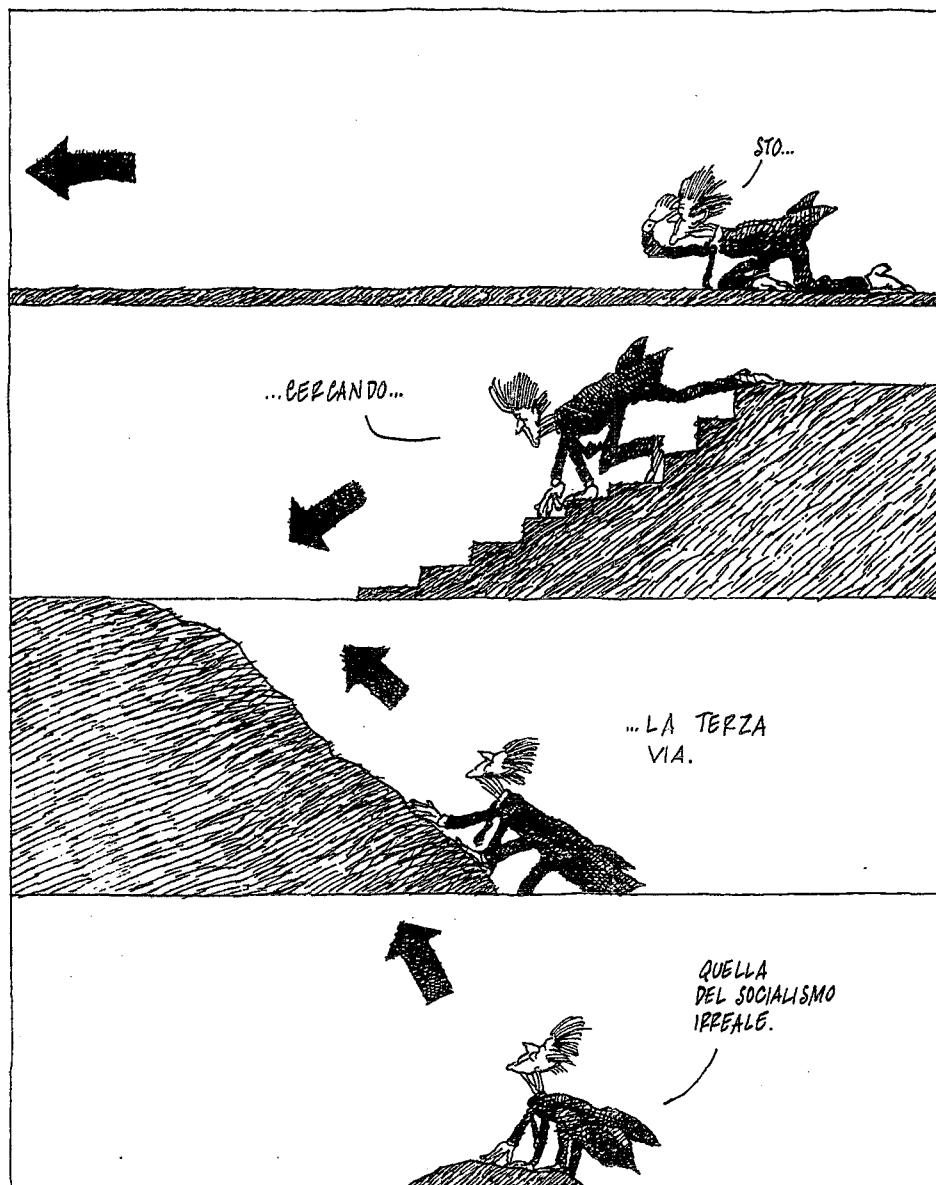
Through the looking glass.

In many respects, crossing from France to Italy these days is like going through the looking glass. For one thing, in France everyone seems carried away by solidarity with Polish workers—except Communist Party leaders. But in Italy, Communist Party leaders' condemnation of Soviet repression of Polish workers is running into grass roots resistance. Communist Party and labor leaders had to bring all their organizational weight to bear to keep a recent Milan demonstration for Poland from being a flop, and even so, many of the marching workers preferred to chant slogans against

Communists turn to a "third way"

SORRIDA, PREGO

di TULLIO PERICOLI ed EMANUELE PIRELLA



Berlinguer: "I'm looking for the 'third way'...the way of unreal socialism."

U.S. intervention in El Salvador.

At a time when pressure is on to reduce the wage mass in Italy, many Italian workers grumble that everyone is praising Solidarity for making demands that no Western labor movement could get away with. Besides, Italian workers who have fought for years against clerical interference in both their politics and their daily lives are easily irritated by the Poles' religiosity. It is striking how much more piously Catholic Solidarity appears in Italy—thanks largely no doubt to Vatican and Christian Democratic influence—than in secular France, where Solidarity has a much more revolutionary image. Indeed, each country seems to create its own Poland to suit its own notions.

The most serious objection to the break with Moscow comes from those who feel the PCI is playing into U.S. hands at a time when the Reagan administration is deliberately creating international tension and preparing for war in Central America, the Middle East and perhaps even in Europe against the Soviet Union itself. These people believe that with the USSR out of the way, the U.S. would be able to crush all revolutionary and anti-imperialistic movements—for example, in Southern Africa, where black liberation movements receive Soviet arms.

A long Berlinguer interview in the Feb.

21 *Unita* attempted to answer the main objections the PCI has been running into from its base. Berlinguer started off by denying that "the development of socialism can consist essentially in the expansion of influence of the so-called socialist camp." Such a conception had failed to provide "ways and means to develop real revolutionary processes" in the West and had reduced communist parties to a role of propaganda and support.

He said the Soviet accusation that the PCI underestimated the danger of war was completely false. On the contrary, he stressed, for peace was the "supreme criterion." Nuclear weapons have changed the problem of war, he argued. The outcome of nuclear war would not be (as in past wars) defeat of the opposing forces, but suppression of life on earth.

"This being the case, we fail to understand how the question of preserving peace can be boiled down to a matter of the international class struggle," the Italian Communist leader said, contradicting the dogma by which the Kremlin justifies its own military might.

"Today, to safeguard and promote peaceful coexistence it is necessary above all to take into account the security needs of all states, from the smallest to the largest (like the USSR, the USA and China), whatever the class nature of their internal system.... Peaceful coexistence rests on

the assumption that even capitalist states can adopt a peace policy. If instead, you start out by discriminating between social systems, then any effective contribution to peace from within the capitalist states is denied to start with, and you end up giving a sense of powerlessness and uselessness to peace movements, since everything is left up to the relationship of forces between...two blocs."

Afghanistan showed the danger of the Soviet doctrine's assertion that peace was strengthened by building up the "peace camp." On the contrary, the Soviet armed intervention only encouraged the other side to be more aggressive and damaged the cause of peace. Berlinguer stressed that opposition to foreign intervention was a main source of the broad movement of solidarity with anti-imperialist struggles in Nicaragua and El Salvador.

Thus, if everything is brought down to the international class struggle, identified with two military blocs, then "there is no role left for Europe, which if able to act on its own could make a more effective, if not decisive, contribution to detente, peace and security."

Berlinguer emphasized the "decisive role of the workers movement in Europe" in providing "solutions and new ideas." He said the observation that both social democracy and Soviet-style communism had run their creative course was not a condemnation of their positive achievements, and the PCI objected to "demonization" of both the USSR and of social democracy. "But the essential thing today is that the capitalist system... no longer provides those economic margins on which the major social democratic parties have based their action and their fortunes." So they have to look for new solutions, and the PCI wants to get its word in.

A single alliance.

As secretary general, Berlinguer's role is to hold the party together by synthesizing, or at least combining verbally, its leading tendencies into something resembling a coherent policy. The "historic compromise" policy is dead. Put in terms of personalities, the new "third way" policy expressed by Berlinguer combines the PCI's pragmatic right, identified with Giorgio Napolitano, and its idealistic left, identified with Pietro Ingrao, into a single alliance against the pro-Soviet old guard represented by Armando Cossutta.

As leader of the PCI parliamentary group, Napolitano personifies the party's office holders and practical politicians who want to get on with the business of getting elected and governing. Napolitano is widely referred to as a social democrat or even as the PCI's leading "pro-American." In theory, by removing the veto on PCI participation in national government, the break with Moscow should above all strengthen Napolitano's position in the party. But the triumph of the "pragmatic right" is being held in check, at least temporarily, by two factors: the need for a more revolutionary discourse to combat the pro-Soviet current (ready to pounce on signs of conversion to social democracy as proof of treacherous sell-out), and the circumstance that the PCI's current electoral and governing prospects are not great, due to the Socialist Party's refusal of left unity. The Socialist Party has not only ruled out PCI participation in national government, but also has begun aligning with centrist and right city councilors to force Communist mayors to resign in Florence and other major cities.

The surprising man of the hour is scholarly, 74-year-old Pietro Ingrao, the leader of the PCI left who lost his political battle back in the '60s when the Manifesto group was thrown out of the party. A former president of the national assembly, strongly critical of the Soviet system, Ingrao popularized the term "third way" in a 1978 book. His doubts extend to the whole party-state structure of both communist and social democratic movements—and Berlinguer's attention to "new needs" and "new movements" echoes Ingrao. For Ingrao, the "third way does not pass between social democracy and the left model, but to the left of both" □

The new approach espoused by Berlinguer involves overcoming capitalism while preserving and developing democracy.



Article by
Joel Parker and Dan Biggs

In 1971, President Richard Nixon nationalized American passenger trains, with the blessings of Wall Street, a Democratic Congress and most of the same railroad leaders who for decades had cringed at the mere mention of government intervention. The national press hailed the creation of Amtrak as a last chance for this dying form of transportation, and rail passenger enthusiasts optimistically predicted a renaissance.

Ten years later, Amtrak Vice President Clark Tyler would reflect, "It was set up almost by design so it could collapse. It's a miracle it could survive at all."

For, despite the inaugural rhetoric about the rebirth of passenger trains and the need to create a "balanced national transportation system," Amtrak was created to fail—and quickly. It was set up to phase out the remnants of what was once a healthy and extensive national passenger train network, and to remove the onus of that undertaking from the hard-pressed private railroads.

Amtrak's tempestuous 10-year history, and its "miraculous" survival, provides a rare and illuminating portrait of the problems faced by a nationalized company trying to stay afloat in the hostile waters of American free enterprise ideology. As Tyler himself asks, "How can you exist as an enterprise with your banker dedicating himself to taking you out of the game?"

Every administration since Amtrak's creation, Republican and Democratic, has sought to cut back or eliminate the skeletal rail passenger system. Time and again politicians would metamorphose from Amtrak supporters to opponents upon entering the executive branch and leaving their regional base behind. Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan both lobbied for increased Amtrak service for their states while they were governors. Brock Adams, architect of the proposed dismantling of Amtrak in 1978 when serving as Carter's secretary of transportation, had been a staunch Amtrak supporter as a congressman from Indiana.

Amtrak's budgetary problems date back to its creation. In 1969, the railroad industry was in recession. Freight profits were minimal and passenger losses were skyrocketing. Despite the railroads' ruthless 10-year crusade to eliminate passenger service by driving away riders, passenger trains still constituted a serious drain on the industry. So the railroads turned to the government for relief.

Congress considered directly subsidizing the railroads' passenger deficit. But staffers at the Department of Transportation (DOT), under Secretary John Volpe, saw serious problems with the subsidy approach. The railroads, whose public image had taken a beating during the '60s, would have no incentive to cut losses with the government picking up the tab.

But by setting up a "quasi-public, for-profit" corporation, the government could remove the passenger albatross from the railroads. "The people at DOT and Congress who were working on this knew full well that Amtrak was not going to be a profitable enterprise," said Alan Boyd. "They really thought this was a halfway house, to get the burden off the railroads back."

Volpe, perhaps, had a more sanguine view of the future of passenger trains, but it took months of bitter administration in-fighting to sell the Amtrak scheme to a reluctant President Nixon and his hostile lieutenants. In April 1970, when Nixon finally assented to the Amtrak plan, a bill was hurriedly drawn up and pushed through Congress with little debate. That October, Amtrak was signed into law.

It was a costly victory for Volpe. His advocacy of Amtrak was to be a major

factor in Nixon's decision to replace him as transportation secretary at the end of one term. The lesson was not lost on subsequent secretaries, who would faithfully parrot the reigning administration's anti-Amtrak line.

Amtrak was sold both to Congress and the administration as a two-year experiment that, in the words of Roger Lewis, Amtrak's first president, began life as a "virtual bankrupt." The 1971 authorization of \$40 million for operating costs and \$100 million in loan guarantees indicated the hopes held for Amtrak by a Congress that in the same year approved four-and-a-half billion dollars for highway construction.

Even more devastating, Congress required year-to-year funding for Amtrak, which made long-range planning impossible. Each year Amtrak has marched up Capitol Hill to beg for money, only to encounter administration proposals for cutbacks and congressional footshuffling.

To make matters worse, private transportation companies, particularly Grey-

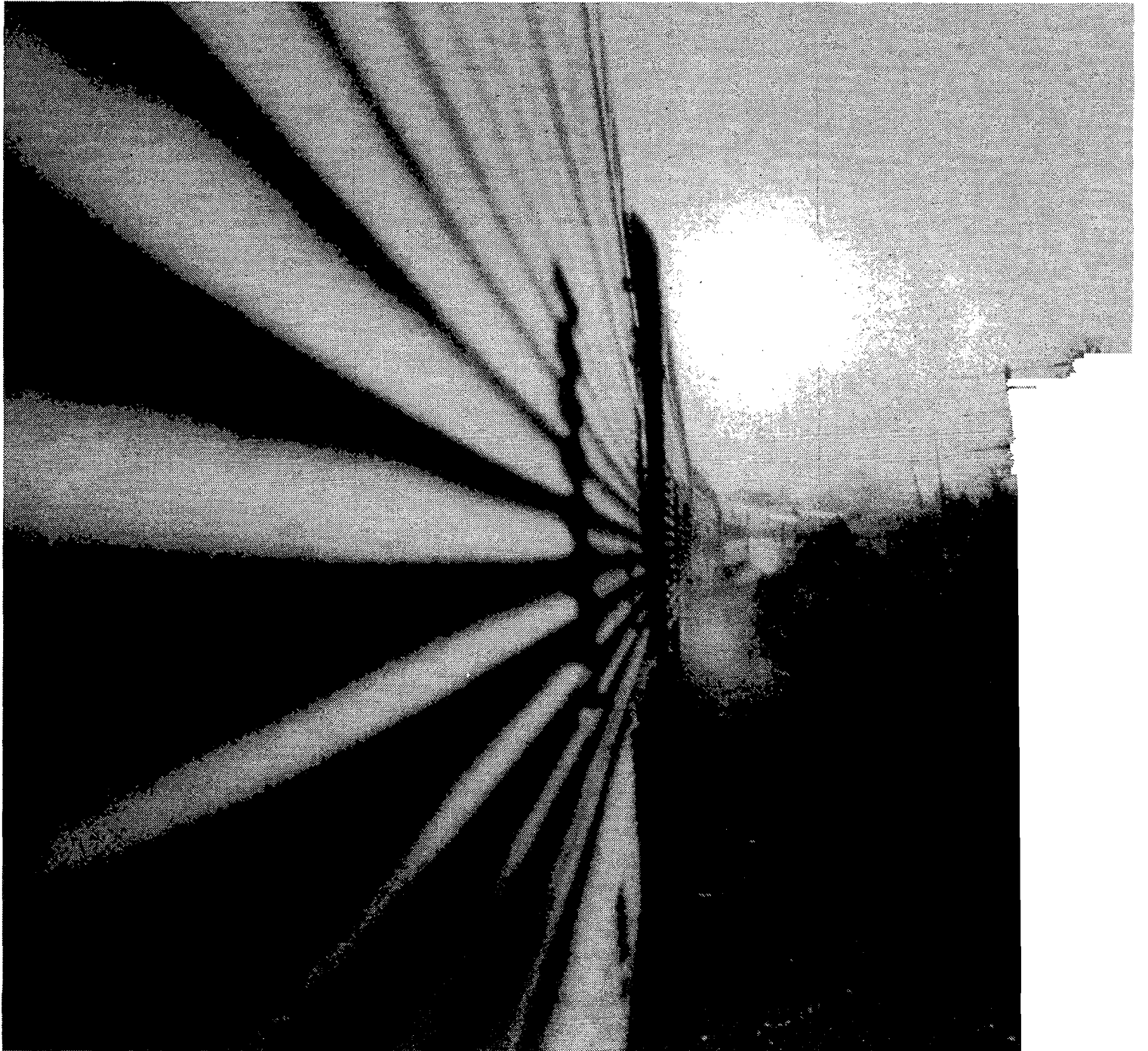
hound, annually attacked Amtrak's federal subsidy as unfair competition. And the private railroads, now concentrating on their profitable freight business and diversifying into lucrative non-railroad ventures, retained a stranglehold on Amtrak operations because they owned the tracks. While graciously accepting about \$250 million a year from Amtrak to operate its trains over their properties, the railroads made their fears known at the DOT—too many passenger trains would get in the way of their freight traffic.

Alan Boyd upon assuming Amtrak's presidency in 1978 described the consequences: "Locomotives built in the '30s, passenger cars built in the '40 and '50s, trackage and roadbed whose major characteristic is 'deferred maintenance,' stations that are falling apart, schedules that serve major markets less than daily or in the middle of the night, or both, routings that are circuitous and a fleet that can never be responsive to peak demand."

But Amtrak survived, thanks to a large dose of luck and steadily mounting

popular support. In 1973, the simultaneous outbreak of the nation's first energy crisis and the deepening Watergate scandal deterred Nixon from pulling the plug. The 1979 energy scare repelled Carter's assault and massive public resistance in 1981 held off Reagan's attack. Even so, after 10 years, Amtrak still has no long-term funding mandate. Its future is as precarious as when it was first created.

Amtrak's lacked qualified managers from the beginning. Roger Lewis, Amtrak's first president, had no previous railroad experience—members of Congress reasoned that given the private





railroads' historic aversion to passenger service, Amtrak's management core should be recruited from outside the industry. This proved to be disastrous, since most of the newcomers, particularly those from the airline industry, were unprepared for the exigencies of passenger train operations and for the stonewalling tactics of the private railroads.

Most of the qualified people Amtrak did attract quickly headed for the exits. Jim McClellan, now with the Southern Railway, had a strong passenger train background when he left the DOT to work for Amtrak in 1971. McClellan recalls being one of a handful on Amtrak's first team "who knew an engine from a caboose." Making matters worse, he says, was that "there were very few good railroad people left. Passenger service ten

years before had been a dead-end street. The good guys in the industry had gone into freight." And the capable ones still around, most nearing pension age, elected to remain with their more stable home railroads.

The difficulty in attracting and keeping qualified management still plagues Amtrak. In order to attract a qualified labor force, Congress, at the rail unions' urging, offered strong labor protection guarantees should Amtrak fold—guarantees currently under attack by the Reagan administration. But on the management level Amtrak's instability, magnified by the salary caps and other stigmas associated with being a government enterprise, acted as a powerful deterrent.

Chris Knapton, who left Amtrak after a year to take his current post with the Association of American Railroads, explains, "I felt like I was in the third world of railroading." Knapton, who had spent five years with the bankrupt Rock Island, recalls asking himself, "Do I need to go down with two sinking ships in a row?"

The key to Amtrak's survival has been the political appeal of passenger trains. Volpe was charged with developing Amtrak's initial route map. He was under intense pressure from Nixon to devise a small, corridor-based network, with few if any long distance routes. But Volpe quickly discovered that members of Congress would never accept a system that didn't serve their home areas.

Routes were determined as much by the political clout of key congressmen as by rational criteria. Harley Staggers, the powerful chairman of the House Commerce Committee, thundered, and West Virginia wound up with three trains. Mike Mansfield threatened to block Amtrak's start-up—Montana suddenly got an additional train. The lesson was not lost on future Amtrak managements.

Amtrak foes learned to play the pork-barrel game as well. In 1978, Brock Adams' first cutback plan would have eliminated Nevada's only train. Howard Cannon, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, fumed and vowed to oppose the entire cutback proposal. The DOT quickly revised the cutback map, and Nevada not only kept its *Zephyr*, but also got a second train.

Porkbarrel politicking got particularly nasty during the latest congressional debate over Reagan's proposed cutbacks. In 1979, the House imposed on Amtrak a set of performance criteria for the continuation of routes, allegedly to settle the political train question once and for all. In 1981 four trains failed the test, the two main ones being the *Pioneer* from Portland, Ore., through Idaho to Salt Lake City, and the *Cardinal*, a Harley Staggers holdover that ran from Chicago through Ohio and West Virginia to Washington, D.C.

Amtrak, aware that the *Pioneer* ran through the home state of Republican Bob Packwood, chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee, doctored the stat-

istics for the train so that it qualified for continuation. Although Packwood's office denied that a deal had been made, Packwood reversed his stand and came out for continued funding for Amtrak's national system. Meanwhile, the *Cardinal*, which came much closer to meeting the criteria than the *Pioneer* until the statistics were juggled, was slated for discontinuance.

The largely Democratic delegations from the *Cardinal* states were enraged, and an aide to Rep. James Florio (D-N.J.), the author of the route criteria in 1979, flew to an Amtrak board meeting in Chicago to ask Boyd to ignore the criteria and keep running the train. Under intense pressure from a board of newly appointed Reagan henchmen, Boyd refused and the *Cardinal* ceased operation in October. The Democrats rallied their forces, and through the agency of Sen. Robert Byrd (D-W.Va.) made an end run around Packwood's Commerce Committee and restored the *Cardinal* when the Amtrak bill hit the Appropriations Committee. In early January the *Cardinal* resumed service, although only three days a week.

These shenanigans reflect the popular appeal Amtrak has at the state and local level. Members of Congress are much more susceptible to constituent pressure than the executive branch. But given Amtrak's limited funding resources, it has also distorted attempts to devise a route system that could operate at maximum efficiency and serve the most people. As the number of trains continue to dwindle due to presidential pressure, the political manipulation of routes will eventually fail to produce enough votes to sustain the system.

Because Amtrak was neither the product of a popular movement nor a among government policy makers, its direction largely depended on who seized control of it.

Congress wanted no part of that task. The slapdash substitution of the Amtrak bill in 1970 for the long-considered subsidy legislation precluded congressional debate on the purpose and direction of the new entity. So, although Amtrak was to be totally dependent on government funding, Congress agreed to a confusing "quasi-public" structure that shielded Congress from responsibility for the system's failings. A non-governmental board of directors—eight appointed by the president, three by the railroads—was ceded responsibility for charting the course of the fledgling enterprise. Of the first eight presidential appointees, only one had railroad experience. Throughout Amtrak's history, the board, according to a former member, simply acted as a

rubberstamp for policies framed by Amtrak's top management.

Roger Lewis came to Amtrak with the bitter memory of having just been ousted as the chief executive of General Dynamics after bucking the company's largest shareholder. He was not about to repeat that mistake, and Amtrak's first years were marked by a cautious adherence to priorities set by a White House intent on Amtrak's destruction.

When Lewis, following orders from the White House, asked Congress to lower its proposed funding for Amtrak in 1972, Congress was harshly critical, and slashed Lewis' salary. But, after much public browbeating of Lewis' tentative approach, Congress let the anti-rail DOT draw up a plan for Amtrak's future.

Unlike Lewis, Amtrak's second president, Paul Reistrup, was a veteran railroader who upgraded Amtrak operations. But Reistrup, like Lewis, had little taste for Washington politicking, and when Carter announced his plans to savage the system in 1978, Reistrup left in disgust.

Alan Boyd, Amtrak's third and current president, understood the primacy of politics in the Amtrak equation. As ex-Secretary of Transportation under Lyndon Johnson, he is no stranger to the political intrigues of Washington. Where operations was the most powerful department under Reistrup, the government affairs department was elevated to that status under Boyd, along with the marketing department, for Boyd understood that Amtrak's strongest political asset was crowded trains.

Boyd's unprecedented criticism of Reagan's Amtrak proposals has signaled a growing breach between Amtrak management and the government. It is as if the nationalized entity has taken on a life of its own, with recent talk about attracting private capital for the development of corridors, diversification into non-railroad revenue-producing ventures and Boyd's pronouncement of the need to "liberate Amtrak from federal dependency."

In Congress, the generally anti-Amtrak Senate has taken the line that Amtrak should be freed from congressionally-imposed guidelines to be "run as a business." Some hope that when Amtrak fails its cost-to-revenue goals, it will then be dismantled. But, in the more pro-Amtrak House, under the leadership of Florio, the trend has been to impose more congressional control, establishing not only route performance criteria, but also restrictive guidelines on dining and sleeping car service, fare policy and corridor development. The 1981 Amtrak legislation was weighted with House-inspired restrictions on Amtrak management prerogatives.

On the Executive side (*In These Times*, March 24), Reagan's initial move to take over the board of directors represented a "substantive change of direction," according to Reistrup. Reagan has since appointed a second board, whose members are not so clearly pawns of the administration. The verdict is still out as to whether Reagan will attempt to use this new board to control Amtrak policy, or opt instead to disrupt the system by continually chopping its budget.

Ironically, given its history, Amtrak has by and large succeeded. Rail passenger service, which was a debacle when Amtrak assumed operations, is now an attractive, if not widely available, alternative for American travellers. Amtrak has shattered the myth that Americans would never leave their cars if offered a decent rail alternative. But the myth that a nationalized enterprise has no place in American life is proving a more enduring handicap.

Joel Parker and Dan Biggs are former chairmen of a Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks local in the San Francisco Bay area.

Next time: The pros and cons of rail passenger service in the U.S.

Photographs: Diane Schmidt



LETTERS

IN THESE TIMES is an independent newspaper committed to democratic pluralism and to helping build a popular movement for socialism in the United States. Our pages are open to a wide range of views on the left, both socialist and non-socialist. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

POLAND AND SALVADOR

YOUR READERS MAY BE INTERESTED to know that the Solidarity Support Campaign has organized an all-day conference on Sat., April 17, entitled, "Protest and Survive: Poland, El Salvador and Disarmament," to be held at New York City's Riverside Church beginning at 10:00 a.m. The SSC sponsored a meeting attended by more than 600 people in support of the Polish workers' movement in November of last year, before the imposition of martial law.

The present conference is a continuation of SSC's efforts to foster activity and discussion linking the struggles for democratic rights around the world with the fight for peace and nuclear disarmament.

A plenary session will open the conference and feature Daniel Singer, leading writer on Solidarity and author of *The Road to Gdansk*; Dan Smith, chairperson of the Campaign for European Disarmament and co-editor with E.P. Thompson of *Protest and Survive*; and a representative of the movement against American intervention in El Salvador. Workshops will follow, including as panelists, trade union activists, intellectuals and members of international resistance movements and will focus on issues in workers' self-management, repression, disarmament, as well as the role of religion in democratic struggles in both East and West.

For advance tickets or to contribute write, Solidarity Support Campaign, 301 W. 105th St., NYC 10025.

—Pete Camarata
Alexander Erlich
Barbara Garson
Joanne Landy
Seymour Melman
Grace Paley
Harley Shalkin
Lawrence Weschler

OFF KEY

IN HIS REVIEW OF DAVID DUNAWAY'S Pete Seeger biography, Bob Cohen criticizes Seeger's alleged "unwillingness to discuss the dishonest, manipulative and exploitative way the American Communist Party used the folk music movement...." Cohen, so far as I know, was not involved in that movement; Dunaway, who was just a little kid at the time, certainly was not. I was

—and I'd like to know just what the hell they're talking about.

I was a member of People's Songs—the only "folk music movement" going during the '40s and '50s—from its formation in 1946 until 1957, when I quit the music business for writing. I was also, for a good part of that time, a member of the Communist Party. Evidently I was manipulating the movement in a dishonest, exploitative way. Well, tell me about it.

American folk music has, of course, existed as long as there have been people in America. The American folk music movement, however, was largely created by leftists, many of them Communists or "com-synps." This was certainly true of People's Songs, meaning—according to modern folklore—that it *must* have been manipulative, dishonest, etc. The facts, as I saw them, were different. The songs we were writing and singing were songs against war, against racial and religious bigotry, against the atomic bomb and for human brotherhood and justice—very much the sort of things that leftist folksingers are still singing about today. Some of those songs, obviously, are now outdated—who now remembers the Sen. Theodore Bilbo about whom my then wife and I wrote a very popular satirical ditty? But I cannot recall one I would feel embarrassed to sing today, so far as ideological content is concerned.

As regards "exploitation," People's Songs ended the exploitation of performers by left organizations, by establishing the principle that singing "for a good cause" didn't, and shouldn't, mean singing for free. As a result, some of us actually managed to make a living, or part of one, from folk music. People's Songs also made a point of pushing black performers, some of whom can fairly be said to have gotten their first professional break through its programs and other activities. One of these was Harry Belafonte; though he was never (to my knowledge) a Communist, it was the (Communist) left that spotted his talent and gave it public exposure well before he became a star.

At its worst, the Communist Party (in particular, its top leadership) could be as manipulative as any present-day Marxist sect—and that's pretty damn manipulative. But to conclude from this that any project Communists were involved in was therefore, by definition, manipulative, dishonest and all the rest of it, is to adopt the standards of "proof" of Joe McCarthy and the House Un-American Activities Committee. It

also does a serious injustice to the many people who, like Pete Seeger, were doing the best they could to bring about a saner, more humane, more peaceful world.

—Robert Claiborne
New York

ACTING ON FAITH

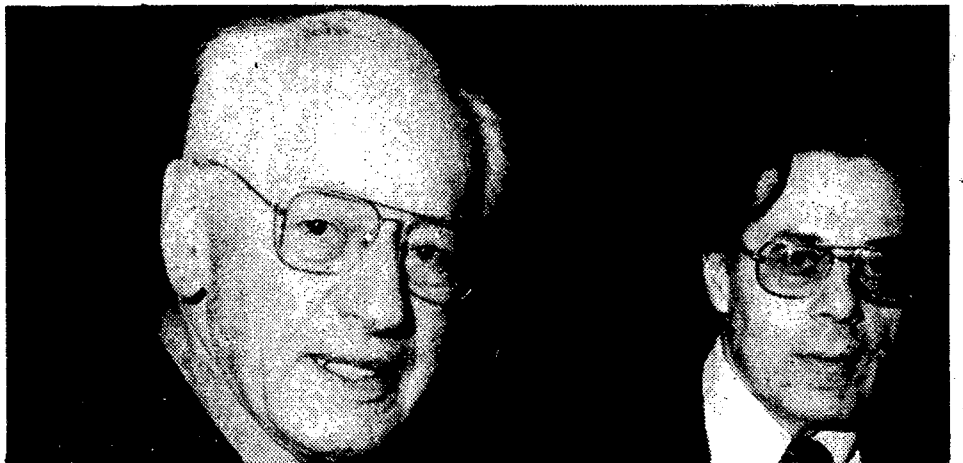
THOMAS BROM'S FAVORABLE REPORT on Grenada's revolution (*ITT*, March 17) captures the vibrancy of the social experiment there, but I doubt he is right in arguing that the development of local action groups and parish councils promises a real "people's democracy."

At its best, a grassroots democracy will allow programs to be implemented with the active support of the population. But another aspect of democracy, the prevention of continuous implementation of undesirable and unpopular programs, is also equally important. For that limiting function of democracy to be filled, a politically active population must be free to argue for alternative programs, and have a chance to assume office in order to implement their ideas. This aspect of democracy, in short, requires the rights of a free press, political organization and democratic choice of all leadership positions.

Yet these are explicitly rejected in Grenada today. Opposition parties and newspapers are banned and the Westminster model of national elections is dismissed as "foolishness" and elections are "not a priority."

Grenada clearly has made major social advances. I agree that the current government is more attuned to the wishes of the population than that in other Caribbean nations. But the mechanisms of democracy essential to secure continued advances—advances that may require changes in the program and personnel of government—are not present. That failure gives rise to concern for that country's future.

—Jay R. Mandle
Baltimore, Md.



Rapp-Coudert veterans Sidney Eisenberg, Moe Foner and Maxwell Weisman.

CARRYING IDEALISM TOO FAR

IT IS REGRETFUL THAT *ITT* HAS ABANDONED its stand of scientific realism in favor of a romantic spiritualism, as shown by the photo of Moe Foner's ghost (*ITT*, March 10). This is definitely in bad taste.

—J. Hatfield
Bristol, Va.

HINDERING TYRANNY

THOMAS BROM, IN HIS ENTHUSIASTIC endorsement of a "new kind of democracy" in Grenada (*ITT*, March 17), has overlooked one fact. Any government, no matter how genuine its commitment to democracy and the people, will eventually find it convenient to exploit and oppress the people. The only way to prevent that is to guarantee the people's right to periodically replace one government with another one. A two-party or multi-party system may well be a hindrance to "development" in Grenada. But it will also be a hindrance to tyranny. And without such a hindrance, the revolution in Grenada will follow the path of many other twentieth century revolutions.

—Jeffrey Cox
Iowa City

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL WORKERS

I AM WRITING IN RESPONSE TO IRWIN Silber's letter (*ITT*, March 17). It is not my intention to engage in the debate over whether or not the Eastern European countries are in fact socialist, but I have some criticisms of his position on Poland.

In the first place, I would like to be able to think that a Communist Party represents the working people it claims to represent. Secondly, it should be possible for questions over Party decisions to be open to public debate. As representatives of the working class, I don't see why it should be considered traitorous if the working class protests Party decisions, even to the point of going out on a general strike.

The quality of life is in fact a function of the social system we live in, and since it is our lives we are talking about, I want to have something to say about those big decisions that are being made.

I would like to think that revolution is a process, not a dogma. I would like to think also, as a worker, that I'm bright enough and competent enough, with the help of my fellow workers, to do something about making it grow. I support the Polish workers. It's their country. Let them run it.

—Anne Ireland
Chicago

UNREPRESENTATIVE

MY READING OF THE COVERAGE OF Afro-American affairs in *ITT* has always been an enlightening and pleasurable experience, particularly the articles by Manning Marable. However, your photo editor, or whoever, must have been asleep at the sensitivity-to-racism-switch when the photo on page 3 (*ITT*, Feb. 17) was used to illustrate the article entitled "Reagan's plan slights cities." The photo shows two black women sitting next to a Thunderbird wine bottle. The caption speaks of

the reduction of disposable income as if a restoration of the cuts would enable the two women to have more Thunderbird. There are enough hard-working, sober, black women raising families out there to eliminate the need for setting two winos up as representative of the ghetto. Is it really poor taste, white racism or someone sabotaging *ITT* from within?

—Howard Johnson
New Paltz, NY

ON TARGET

I REALLY MUST OFFER SOME PRAISE for "Sorry, I'm a Vegetarian" (*ITT*, March 10). Until recently I was employed in a small plastics shop running a press. The thinking processes and thoughts he described really have more than a little ring of truth to them. Industrial life does do that sort of thing to people. One of the best descriptions I've ever seen.

—Bob Potter
Kent, Ohio

Editor's note: Please try to keep letters under 250 words in length. Otherwise we may have to make drastic cuts, which may change what you want to say. Also, if possible, please type and double-space letters—or at least write clearly and with wide margins.

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PERSPECTIVES



Gordon Quinn

Soviet people support arms

By Matthew Evangelista

MOST AMERICANS DID not think much about the trade-off between military programs and socio-economic welfare until the Reagan budget made it impossible to ignore. The 1983 proposals call for a 14 percent increase in military spending and further slashing of social programs. Now even some Republican politicians are beginning to realize that the "cuts" in social spending are really massive transfers—from the people to the Pentagon.

In the Soviet Union, the military-social trade-off is much more obvious, and everyone recognizes it. In talking with people there, the most common reason one hears offered for long lines, shortages of food, unavailable or poor-quality consumer goods, is high military spending. Why do they put up with it then? Isn't there a limit to what the average Russian will stand for?

Some Reagan advisors, notably Harvard professor Richard Pipes, think that there is a limit, and that the U.S. should push for it. Pipes advocates an all-out arms race, in which the U.S. would "out-race" the Soviets until internal pressure brings down the Communist regime. This policy is based on the assumption that the Soviet people generally oppose their government and its military policies, and in the event of serious economic deprivation would rise up against them. Is this an accurate conception of popular opinion in the USSR?

A recent trip to the Soviet Union provides some evidence that it's not, and that Pipes is wrong. Not only is his "policy" pernicious—dependent as it is on making the majority of the Soviet people miserable enough to revolt—but also it won't work. For one thing, the Soviet government won't let itself be "out-raced." Soviet leaders are committed to maintaining parity with the U.S., whatever the costs. And most of the people would support their government's attempts to keep up with the U.S. military build-up. That impression comes from a look at the historical record, and from conversations with a variety of Soviet citizens—factory workers, soldiers, students, intellectuals, collective farmers and party

bureaucrats—from many regions of the country, including Russia, the Ukraine, Soviet Georgia and Moldavia.

The overriding impression one gets from talking to these people is of strong popular support for Soviet military policy. Even in the *samizdat* literature of Soviet dissidents, criticism of the military is rare. In fact, many in the West would say that Soviet military policy, and particularly the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany in 1945, constitute the regime's major source of legitimacy.

Few visitors to the Soviet Union return without bringing back some World War II stories from their Russian hosts. It's more than a product of party propaganda. For people of Brezhnev's generation and younger, the Second World War constitutes the most formative experience of their lives. We met a truck driver in Poltava whose only previous contact with Americans had been meeting Allied soldiers at the liberation of Berlin in 1945. He proudly displayed a Timex wristwatch that one of the Americans had given him. "It still works. Great watch! Great country!" Once, a woman sitting next to us on a suburban Leningrad train was happy to find out we were Americans—and not Germans. "I still can't bring myself to talk to Germans," she said, and by way of explanation began to tell of how she had miraculously survived the three-year siege of Leningrad. When it ended in 1944, she was only 17 years old, but looked like an old woman. People on the street would call her *babushka*, or "grandmother."

Driving through the agricultural regions of southern Russia, we unexpectedly came upon a group of collective farm workers. They were having their lunch and invited us to join them. Although they didn't talk much of the war, its influence was evident. Of the dozen or so workers we saw, only two were men. The women, mostly in their 50s and 60s, had all lost either their husbands or their prospective husbands in the war. As we left—our arms loaded with food that they insisted we take along for the road—our hosts called out messages for us to carry home: "Tell them we want peace, that we don't want your children to ever know war."

It has become common wisdom to contrast such pacifistic sentiments among the Russian people with the militaristic ac-

tions of their government. Lately, many young people in Leningrad and Moscow have been sporting peace symbols and European Nuclear Disarmament buttons. But nobody—here or there—seriously believes there's any possibility of a popular movement against Soviet intervention in Afghanistan or deployment of SS-20s targeted on Europe. Whenever demonstrations of any kind occur in Red Square, it rarely takes the KGB more than a few minutes to round up and cart off the protesters.

But there's more to it than that. Young Russians will be the first to admit that for many of them the peace symbol has no political meaning. It's *modno*—"fashionable"—like wearing Western jeans or dancing to disco music. An important reason for lack of opposition to Soviet military policy—one that's hard for Westerners to accept—is that most Sov-

Most Soviet citizens know that military spending is the reason for consumer goods shortages.

iet citizens, including young people, credit the Soviet Army with insuring peace for them in the postwar period. A strong military has necessitated emphasis on heavy industry at the expense of consumer goods, a trade-off the Soviet people have so far been willing to make. The remark of a student from Soviet Georgia is typical: "If our country had not built up heavy industry after the war, there would have been another invasion 10 or 15 years later."

The chronology is important: 10 years after the war, West Germany was rearmed and became a member of NATO; five years later, Kennedy and McNamara began a massive build-up of U.S. Minuteman and Polaris intercontinental missiles, justified by a fictitious "missile gap" with the Soviet Union. During this same period, Nikita Khrushchev was attempting to discard the Stalinist legacy of emphasis on military expenditures to the detriment of agriculture and con-

Continued on following page

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Ruth Goldway
Mayor, Santa Monica, CA

Soviets

Continued from previous page

sumer goods industries. He cut the size of the Soviet armed forces by more than a million and sharply curtailed Stalin's grandiose plans for a major naval build-up. Some of the savings were evidently channeled into the civilian economy, since many Soviet citizens today remember the Khrushchev years as a time of relative prosperity.

But it did not last long. In 1955, the Warsaw Pact was formed in response to German rearmament. In the early 60s, a major program of strategic nuclear missile production was undertaken, after the Cuban missile crisis revealed the humiliating consequences of American nuclear superiority. The Soviet people watched their military strength grow and their products disappear from the shelves. Khrushchev was ousted and his successors were determined to achieve military parity with the U.S. at any cost.

When the Soviet Union tries to match U.S. military power with only 60 percent of the American GNP, the costs are great indeed. But even 10-year-old school children can reel off the list of foreign invasions of Russia—from the Mongols of the 13th and 14th centuries, through Napoleon's burning of Moscow in 1812, the foreign intervention after the Revolution, to the German invasion of 1941.

The Russians' traditional fear for the security of their borders underlies popular support for Soviet policies like the invasion of Afghanistan and martial law in Poland. We met only one person—a member of the Communist Youth League—who voiced the official line that the Soviets were "invited" into Afghanistan. Most people explained the invasion as a way of countering Chinese and Pakistani support for the rebels, and of securing those borders. One young musician we



Even Soviet dissidents tend not to question the need for a high level of military spending.

met in Moscow was so convinced of the legitimacy of Soviet border concerns that, even though he claimed to know of a dozen former schoolmates who were wounded in Afghanistan, he still supported the Soviet intervention. He even granted the U.S. similar "legitimate" concerns. He thought Americans were justified in worrying about a "Cuban threat"!

How great is Soviet concern—popular or official—about the risks of nuclear war? One of the most informed "non-official" persons we met is a young economist, specializing in U.S. military procurement policy. He spoke with considerable expertise about U.S. nuclear weapons—the MX, Pershing II and cruise missiles, the Trident submarines—their research and development, costs and deployment plans. When asked if he knew how many nuclear missiles the Soviet Un-

ion had, he answered "Enough." Although he didn't know even a rough numerical approximation, in his view the Soviet Union couldn't have more than enough missiles. There are no forces in the USSR comparable to the U.S. "military-industrial complex," which for the sake of profits would cause production of more missiles than necessary for security. Although his analysis of Soviet internal politics is lacking, his reasoning is probably similar to that of the Soviet leaders: As long as their stated goal is "parity" with the U.S., and as long as the U.S. is accelerating its own nuclear weapons production, then the Soviets don't have "too many" nuclear weapons. The notion of a minimum deterrent has no more relevance in the Soviet Union today than it does in the U.S.

This is not to say that the Soviet gov-

ernment is unconcerned about the threat of nuclear war. Many Western observers were surprised recently when all of the major Soviet newspapers published lengthy articles reporting on the Washington conference of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War. The articles were low on tendentious propaganda and high on detailed descriptions of the consequences of the use of nuclear weapons—including verbatim translation of conference documents. The conclusions were explicit: The idea of fighting a "limited" nuclear war is insanity, and the concept of victory in a nuclear war is equally ridiculous. These statements undermine Richard Pipes' notion that the Soviets think they can "fight" and win a nuclear war.

Publication of the IPPNW proceedings came as no surprise to most Soviets. The major Soviet newspapers, including *Pravda* and *Izvestia*, provide almost daily coverage of such issues as the American military build-up, the Reagan administration's statements on limited nuclear war fighting, the European peace movement, and Soviet disarmament proposals—many of which are unknown to American readers. The Soviets—rulers and ruled alike—still have confidence in the arms control process that most Americans seem to have given up on.

For a system that places such little importance on the representation of popular opinion, the degree to which Soviet military policy coincides with what most Russians think about issues of war and peace is surprising. But the legitimacy of Soviet leaders' rule depends on it. While many intellectuals have opposed Soviet military intervention wherever it has taken place—Hungary, Czechoslovakia or Afghanistan—most Soviet citizens seem willing to support intervention when the security of their borders seems to them at stake. And they note how often American forces have intervened abroad in the postwar period.

Matthew Evangelista recently returned from an extended trip to the Soviet Union.

Fund Change, Not the Pentagon

On April 15th, how much money will you send to the Pentagon? Hundreds of dollars? Thousands?

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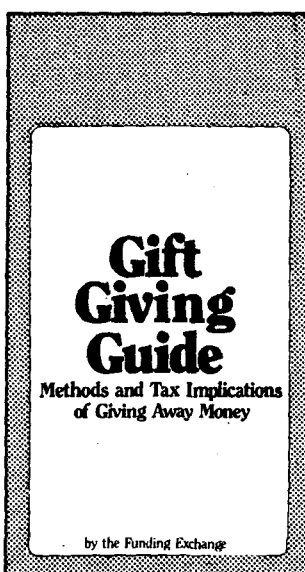
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WOMEN'S APPEAL FOR JUSTICE — IN CHATTANOOGA —

In April, 1980, four elderly Black women were gunned down on the streets of Chattanooga, Tennessee. They were injured when shots were fired from a car carrying three members of the "Justice Knights" of the Ku Klux Klan.

Viola Ellison, Lela Evans, Opal Jackson and Katherine Johnson were all wounded by the shotgun blasts. A fifth woman, Fannie Crumsey, was injured by flying glass during the unprovoked attack.

Three months later, an all-white jury declared that two of the Klansmen were innocent. A third, Marshall Thrash, was sentenced to nine months in jail and served three months on a minor assault charge.

This was the outcome of a state court prosecution despite the fact that it was undeniable that the trio attended a Klan meeting together, picked up cross-burning materials, went to the home of one of them and picked up two shotguns, drove into the heart of Chattanooga's Black community, set a cross afire, drove around and returned, at which point these shots were fired from their car. At the trial, one of them admitted to firing the shots.

As WOMEN, we refuse to countenance terrorists who, purporting to "protect white womanhood," shoot down Black women, assault Black life and target those others who stand for social justice.

As MOTHERS, we pledge to educate our children to stand up against the vicious racism that the Klan represents.

As CITIZENS, we support these courageous women and their civil suit to win judgement against the Klan. And most urgently, we DEMAND that the U.S. Justice Department immediately begin federal criminal prosecutions of those responsible for those and other violent Klan actions under existing Civil Rights and Anti-Klan statutes.

We urge you to add your name to the roll call of women who oppose these assaults, scare tactics and racism of the Ku Klux Klan and similar hate groups.

Lauren Anderson-National Conference of Black Lawyers; Joan Baez; Ella J. Baker; Beryl Banfield-President, Council on Interracial Books for Children; Anita Blackwell-Wilson-Mayor, Mayersville, Mississippi; Anne Braden-Co-Chair, Southern Organizing Committee for Social & Economic Justice; Professor Denise S. Carty-Bennia-Northeastern University of Law; Judy Claude-National Ministries, American Baptist Churches; Ruby Dee-Actress and Writer; Barbara Deming-Writer and Poet; Jan Douglass-Executive Director, Community Relations Commission City of Atlanta; Carol Downer-Feminist Women's Health Center, Los Angeles; Janice Fine-Chair, United States Student Association; Marjorie Fine-Coordinator, Reproductive Rights National Network; Roberta Flack; Dorothy Height-President, National Council of Negro Women; Coretta Scott King; Jacqueline Levine-Chair, Governing Council American Jewish Congress; Evelyn Lowery-President, SCLC/WOMEN; Hilda Mason-Councilwoman, District of Columbia; Joyce Miller-President, Coalition of Labor Union Women; Vivian Jenkins Nelsen-American Lutheran Church; Karen Nussbaum-President, WORKING WOMEN; Consuelo U. Packer-Women's Division, United Methodist Church; Bernice Johnson Reagan-Cultural Worker, Singer, Historian; Patsy Simms-Author, THE KLAN; Eleanor Smeal-President, National Organization of Women; Addie L. Wyatt

* All Organizations Listed for Identification Only

☐ I wish to add my name to the WOMEN'S APPEAL FOR JUSTICE

Name _____

Address _____

Identification _____

☐ I would like to be kept up to date on the future Anti-Klan activities.

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By Pat Aufderheide

Two excellent documentaries on Central American affairs will air on PBS in coming weeks. Both bring pluralism to media coverage of crucial foreign policy issues, and both quietly raise disturbing questions about the quality and the nature of the information we get daily on public affairs.

From the Ashes: Nicaragua Today (on most stations April 7), directed by Helena Solberg-Ladd, gives an overview of life in post-revolution Nicaragua. Its success lies in its sympathetic understanding of the kind of misunderstanding most of us bring to the subject. Often the problem is not that we don't understand "the issues"—although that too happens. The process of social change occurring in someone else's culture just doesn't seem real to us. Our protective ideological walls, built up over years of education and nightly news, are mighty thick. That unreality is rich soil for politicians who choose to represent other peoples as "dupes" or victims of their own political leaders.

Focusing on a Managua family and spending enough time with them to define their personalities as well as their social problems, the film gives a personal view of dramatic political change. It can afford to confront the deficiencies and conflicts of a poor country attempting social change in a geopolitical hot spot, because it also shows the passionate stake that this working-class family has in Nicaragua's future. It also succinctly provides historical background for recent political turmoil, and it links Nicaragua with American foreign policy.

The result is a gentle but effective debunking of Reagan and Haig-sponsored myths.

The Chavarrias family—a shoemaker, seamstress, three teenage daughters and a small son—are going through momentous changes in their daily lives in the way we imagine we might, with hard work, some confusion and without zealotry. Their oldest daughter brought Sandinista notions home to an apolitical household from high school. Gradually they all became involved and after the insurrection they joined in the opened-up political process.

Some of the changes in their lives they welcomed with reservations. The daughters, for instance, go off to teach peasants to read for four months. The parents are lonely, and they are also worried that the girls may abuse newfound freedom. So they undertake to find their daughters in remote mountain villages, and the filmmakers go along. Senora Chavarrias weeps with defeat when she arrives at one town while her daughter is away. But the girl returns early, and weeps in turn with welled-up loneliness at the sight of her parents.

The literacy campaigns taught peasants to read (one man says, "I can write my name.... I can even write a letter!"). But they also changed the teachers, their friends and their families. These are people whose personal lives are now, for better or worse, inextricably linked with political change. And as the narrator points out, "Many families were divided, while others found new



In *FROM THE ASHES*, Jose and Clara Chavarrias travel to the mountains to visit their 14-year-old daughter, who is teaching peasants to read.

LATIN AMERICA

Films debunk Haig's myths

intimacy."

Is there really democratic participation in the new, shortage-plagued life in Nicaragua? The hour-long documentary shows snatches of the political process. But more convincing at a less formal level are on-screen discussions that show how alive the issues are. At home the children argue about what to listen to on the radio. The stern 19-year-old won't let anyone play foreign music in her hearing. "There was a John Travolta fever in this country," she says severely, launching into a lecture on the evils of foreign control of people's values. One of her sisters complains that the 19-year-old once loved to listen to foreign songs, and that they aren't going to close their minds to anything any more, not even foreign music. "We're not going to listen to folk music all the time," she says. Her father settles the point—folk music is for singing and foreign music is for dancing.

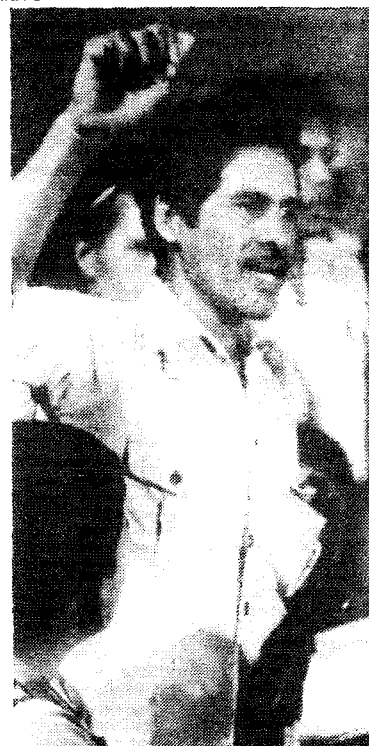
Other debates take place publicly. A peasant argues with an agrarian reform bureaucrat that prices of goods such as shoes are outrageously high and considers the explanation of how long the process of economic recovery will be. National Guardsmen in prison (Nicaragua abolished capital punishment, so prisons overflowed with Guardsmen after the insurrection) meet with the new prison head. They call for conjugal visits and complain about overcrowding. When they say that in Somoza's day there was only one man to a cell, he counters that Somoza killed 59 prisoners for every one he jailed.

Some issues are posed through editing. Alfonso Robelo, a business leader, complains in front of his swimming pool that the government is unjust to private enterprise. The shoemaker re-

sponds to questions about the tensions between business and government in mild tones: "During the insurrection rich and poor were united against Somoza. Now our interests are different, and we are both defending them."

"I think we lived so long under capitalism," he continues, "that some people don't understand that they have much more than they need—and that they can share it."

After getting to know the Chavarrias family, it comes as a shock—like seeing the problem in a funhouse mirror—to switch to Haig's warning that Moscow is overtaking Central America and that the U.S. has an obligation to intervene on the side of not only freedom but safety. Such foreign policy statements, combined with such acts as cut-off of American aid to Nicaragua last April and the State Department's admission that private business groups are getting covert aid, lend substance to comments by Nicaraguans interviewed in the film. They are convinced the U.S. has a deliberate destabilization campaign for Nicaragua. Even more distant from the Nicaraguan reality is one of the film's final scenes, an interview with people training at



Jose Chavarrias speaks at his neighborhood political organization.

a Florida paramilitary training camp. Their macho freedom-fighter dramatics have no connection with the Chavarrias' family's experience of politics.

The film's ending, in which key images evoking issues are superimposed on the faces of the members of the Chavarrias family, is a rare flashy moment in a solidly-constructed, subtly-presented piece.

In public TV program offices *From the Ashes* has already begun to be controversial. In order to provide "balance," WETA in Washington, D.C., will have a discussion panel following the film. At least one station, WT-

TW in Chicago, will show it nine days later than most stations, thus undercutting (intentionally or not) national advertising for the show. And some stations are bleeping out words and images. Ironically, the sore spot is a tape of offhand comments Somoza delivered to a sympathetic international group, in which he said (in his unaccented colloquial English), "If you're like me, you're a bunch of shits!", going on to deride with vulgarities his underdeveloped country.

Now that's obscenity.

Attack on attack.

Americas in Transition, a half-hour documentary nominated for an Oscar, tentatively slated for a national PBS airdate of May 24 and also being shown at the Los Angeles International Film Exposition (Filmex), has a cooler, less personal style. It is an essay arguing against the position that the U.S. must give military aid to El Salvador.

Largely through historical resumes and interviews with officials, the film, directed by Obie Benz, makes two points: the U.S. has been the primary force of intervention in Latin America, and it continues to be; and people have the right to rebel against unjust and dictatorial governments, just as we did in our own revolution. It suggests, finally, that there is no reason why the U.S. could not co-exist with leftist governments in Central America as it does elsewhere in the world.

Originally the film was so constructed as a response to *Attack on the Americas*, a half-hour video mix of hysterical anticommunism and images of green uniforms intercut with urgent pleas for funds and promises to send right-wing newsletters in return. It was straightforward *Reader's Digest* patriotism gone electronic. Designed to be aired nationwide repeatedly, it was later withdrawn—apparently because the filmmakers are getting what they wanted. The Reagan administration wholeheartedly supported policies the film advocates, including military aid for El Salvador.

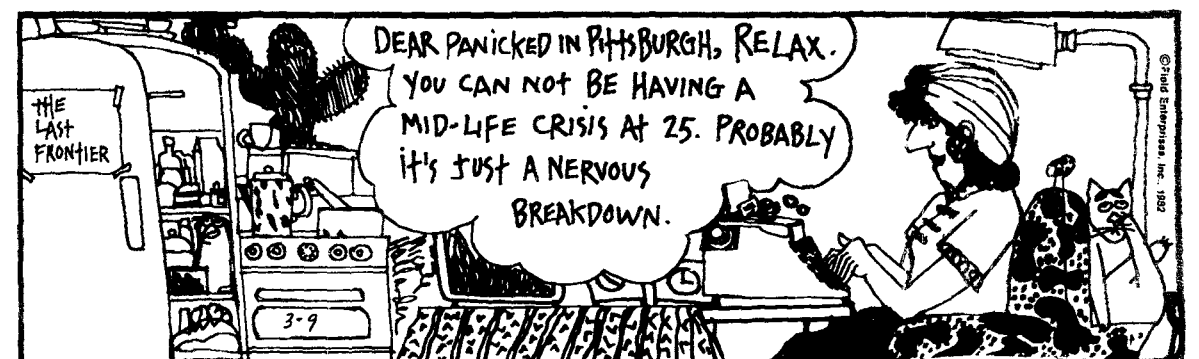
Meanwhile, the need for the information that *Americas in Transition* presents has grown. The argument, illustrated with some surprising historical footage, includes the story of the overthrow of the Arbenz government in Guatemala in 1954, of Juan Bosch in the Dominican Republic and of Allende in Chile, as well as footage of Latin American military being trained at Fort Bragg. Whereas *Attack on the Americas* uses red throbbing points on a map to show communist takeovers, this film uses green glowing bichs to show political changes on the map.

All roads lead to El Salvador, where a familiar historical pattern seems to be repeating itself. The film counters charges of communist aid for guerrillas by suggesting that if one is to speak of foreign involvement the U.S. is the place to start. The notion of foreign-led popular move-

Continued on page 15

SYLVIA

by Nicole Hollander



ORGANIZING

Si Kahn reaches for the grassroots



Emily Friedman

the future.

From years of work, in civil rights, in Appalachia, in the J.P. Stevens campaign and the Brookside Mine Strike, with the Midwest Academy and the Youth Project, Kahn distills tools to empower people. He is confident that anyone can organize. Avoiding the obsession with technique that characterizes some schools of organizing, he spells out to leaders the advantages and disadvantages of their options. In many cases, the ability to foresee such problems as tensions between staff and leadership or jealousy of leaders who join the staff may prevent their occurring. In other cases the knowledge that most problems are common ones can keep them from degenerating into personal battles and give hope in hard situations.

Kahn is unromantic about organizing. It is difficult and often frustrating. Most people will use the book by turning, perhaps in panic, to the chapter which addresses problems they currently face. They will also find helpful advice and practical steps toward thinking through and solving questions such as how to build coalitions, how to create contacts with the media and how to write an effective press release or leaflet.

Soul and spirit.

Kahn recognizes that effective organizing builds and nurtures community life and history. He argues that organizers who expect themselves to sacrifice everything for the project cannot work effectively with people whose families, churches and ethnic communities are powerful and time-consuming priorities in their lives.

"All of our discussion about issues, about tactics and strategies, about planning and decision-making should not ignore some basic facts about our organizations," he writes. "Issues are important. Victories are important. But what most of our members get from the organization goes far beyond the victories and issues. Our organizations provide a sense of soul and spirit to people who have been cut off

from their roots, to people who have been denied their heritages, to people who have had their self-confidence destroyed.

"Our organizations give people back their hopes and dreams."

Through his music, Si Kahn gives a different kind of voice to the hopes and dreams of ordinary people and of radical activists. The songs on *Doing My Job* are musically irresistible—tunes and words echo in your head for days. With warmth and humor he builds puns around harsh realities of occupational disease and powerlessness on the job. ("You read in all the history books/The same old story told/How us poor miners all got rich/Digging that old black gold/But you know the company got the gold/You know the miners' lungs got black...."). He writes in a range of musical styles from bluegrass to rock and roll, to mountain ballads. The Red Clay Ramblers, one of the finest bluegrass groups in the country, provide instrumental and vocal back-up. An insert with the words and chords encourages listeners to make this music their own.

Kahn's most powerful songs deal with the immigrant experience of uprootedness—the loss of kin, neighbors, and sense of place—and with human relations with lovers, parents and children under the disintegrating impact of corporate realities. Several songs deal with the tensions between work and family or personal life. Some are funny; some are wrenching. "Blue Ridge Mountain Refugee" evokes the loneliness of those who followed the trails to northern cities seeking jobs. "Oh they say that/You can't go home again/Never set and talk/Among your childhood friends/Never live among/Your neighbors and your kin/No, you'll never see/Your mountain home again." Other songs could apply as well to organizers as to factory workers.

Among other things, this kind of sensitivity undercuts the macho notion that organizing is all-consuming work before which all else pales into insignificance. Kahn identifies with the people he sings about, just as in his book, he makes it clear that leaders and staff are all in this together. On a subtle but crucial level this is a feminist sensibility which is too often absent from the circles of professional organizers.

The album is dedicated to Si Kahn's grandfather, Gabriel Kahn, and to his son Gabriel. One side ends with a song about the grandfather whose story of daring escape from Czarist Russia and years of work on the Canadian Railroad is on the insert. The other side ends with a song about the newborn son, also Gabriel Kahn. On another stage, that intersection of past and future is what organizing is all about. "Rock me, roll me/Daddy won't you hold me/Keep me in your arms/The whole night through/Across the dreams of thirty years/They're sleeping side by side/The child in me/The newborn child that's you."

Sara Evans, who teaches history at the University of Minnesota, is the author of *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left*.

Organizing: A Guide for Grassroots Leaders

By Si Kahn
McGraw-Hill, 387 pp., \$7.95

Doing My Job

By Si Kahn
Flying Fish, \$8.98

By Sara Evans

A poet, songwriter and organizer, Si Kahn brings to his work both the strategic sensibility and the sensitivity to the nuances of

people's lives that makes organizing for change both necessary and possible. The recent publication of his book and his new album show the breadth of Kahn's contribution to building a democratic movement in America.

His book is the *The Joy of Cooking* or the *Baby and Child Care* of organizing—it provides concrete advice in an easy, conversational mode. At the same time, it is much more than a technical manual. His vision is expressed most clearly in the af-

terword, and readers might begin with this last section. In a poem interspersed with songs, Kahn dramatizes the realities of poverty and powerlessness and suggests what we must do to create community: "Freedom/must be fought for/pride/must be earned//community must be built//power/must be taken." He celebrates the history we build on—civil rights, anti-war, neighborhood and union struggles—and argues that organizing represents our principal hope for

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April 16-17

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Films

Continued from page 13
ments is then challenged—Mexican author and one-time ambas-

sador to France Carlos Fuentes argues that "revolution cannot be exported like bananas." And Murat Williams, an American ex-official, points out that you don't need a communist infiltrator to tell you you're hungry. A sober reading by narrator Ed Asner of the opening of the Ameri-

can Declaration of Independence concludes the argument.

These films mark the maturation of a community of independent filmmakers. Several of the same names appear on the credits for both these films as did on credits for *El Salvador: Another Vietnam* and *Resurgence*, and

several professional generations of political independent filmmakers were involved. The films show good marketing sense as well as political judgement; both avoid a strident tone and provide information of lasting historical value, so that they are appropriate not only for organizing and

current affairs but also for educational audio-visual departments.

For more information on From the Ashes write Document Associates, 211 E. 43rd St., NY, NY 10017; for Americas in Transition write 201 West Broadway, NY, NY 10012.

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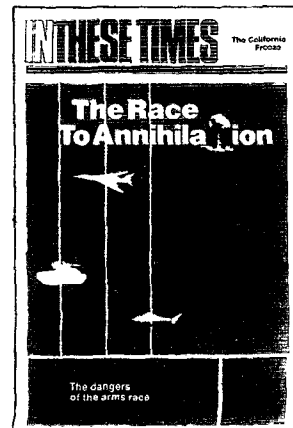
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IN THESE TIMES Classified Advertising, 1509 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60622. (312)489-4444

By Shan Takahashi



A ruthless general in a small African nation has just overthrown a democratic ruler and now leads an international terrorist movement. "He has made his nation a training camp and refuge for the soldiers of tyranny. From this base, they launch their attacks on the free world. The general dreams of spreading tyranny over the entire globe."

The Reagan administration's view of Libya or Angola? No. It's from a comic strip on the package of a new line of paramilitary figures called Eagle Force by Mego Corp., a major toy manufacturer in New York. The "ruthless dictator" is a three-inch die-cast figure named General Mamba, a leader in the Roving International Organization of Tyranny (RIOT). Created to resist Mamba and the other RIOT characters is the Eagle Force—"America's premier strike force to fight world injustice and tyranny." Between the Eagle Force and RIOT, the new Mego line includes 18 characters that retail for about \$2.00 each. It is recommended by Mego for children five years and up.

The Eagle Force is only one line in a rash of paramilitary toys that made their

With him is a host of paramilitary action figures, war games, gun sets and model jets.

debut at the annual toy show February in New York.

During the Vietnam war, retailers and manufacturers quietly disposed of almost all paramilitary toys. G.I. Joe went AWOL. Toy weaponry, war games and military wheel toys disappeared. Today G.I. Joe is back. With him is a host of new or re-introduced paramilitary action figures, war games, gun sets and model kits. Out of the 67 new or reintroduced kits by international model manufacturer Revell, more than 50 percent are military aircrafts, compared with 20 percent last year. Until this year, most of the molds for these models had lain dormant in Revell's factories for a decade.

Hasbro's G.I. Joe is backed by a \$4 million TV ad campaign and Hasbro projects 1982 retail sales in the \$200 million range. The new G.I. Joe is 3 3/4 inches, compared with the original 11-inch doll, and, like the popular Star Wars figures, much of G.I. Joe's success will rely on sales of its accessories—the tank, attack vehicle, artillery laser, missile system and cannon. Like the Eagle Force, the 11-figure Hasbro line is positioned as an anti-terrorist team. G.I. Joe will also be showing up on Halloween costumes, walkie-talkies, radios, pajamas, color-forms, puzzles, boys clothing and thermoses.

One of Hasbro's major licensees for the G.I. Joe name is Marvell Comics Group, whose first issue of "G.I. Joe: A Real American Hero" goes on sale this month. On its cover, G.I. Joe and members of his "special missions force" are shown leaping ahead of their mammoth tank, brandishing laser weapons and machine guns. Caption: "The ultimate weapon in democracy."

So promising is the paramilitary market that companies that had never produced anything even resembling a toy soldier are suddenly manufacturing things like the Combat Copter, a new item by Blue Box. The Combat Copter, whose most significant selling point is that it "flies up to 50 feet high," was showcased at the toy show among the company's more typical ware: the Magic Coffemaker and

G.I. JOE COMES BACK

a children's tool bench.

The Miner Company has come up with a new war "playset" that combines Russian, Japanese, German and U.S. armies. Called World Patrol Forces, the game features the "most up-to-date" weaponry and vehicles, according to a company spokesperson, including surveillance aircraft and patrol vehicles. As with many other companies reentering paramilitary after a 10 to 12-year hiatus, the Miner Company didn't need to make a huge initial investment. They had all the molds. They've had them for years.

Many retailers welcome the resurgence of paramilitary toys. "This country is through taking a back seat to everyone," says a buyer with Oklahoma City-based TG&Y discount stores. "Reagan has made a patriotic, positive stand on defense. The growth in these toys reflects that, and it's about time."

Wary of possible consumer resistance, manufacturers are marketing their lines as heroes in the battle of good against evil, defenders of democracy and the free world. In the new toy market, the word "force" pervades. There's Strike Force, Attack Force, World Patrol Forces, Special Forces and in comic books, G.I. Joe's Special Missions Forces. "Instead of positioning the line as a military toy, we're marketing it as a strike force, a rescue team," says a marketing executive with Mego Corp. "Eagle Force would have gone to Entebbe. They would have gotten our hostages out of Iran."

But a closer look at the Mego Eagle Force shows that it's a lot more than simply a "rescue team." Each Eagle Force character is drawn in comic book fashion. Behind each portrait drawing is the American flag. The Eagle Force's symbol is, not surprisingly, a menacing-looking eagle with wings spread, talons poised for the kill. Each RIOT package bears the logo of a dagger piercing a globe. And just in case the kids who receive this toy don't know what to do with it, all Eagle Force and RIOT packages come with their own comic strip

printed on the back.

Kids can thus receive a rudimentary education in NATO, Europe, Africa and the Mideast *a la* Caspar Weinberger. The comic strip scenarios correspond with the Reagan administration's foreign policy, specifically the anti-detente, anti-third world positions. In one comic strip, a red-garbed Baron Von Chill jumps into a U.S. defense building through a hole in the roof to steal the plans to NATO's latest tank. Von Chill, once a famous scientist, is now "by day, a wealthy European industrialist. By night, the European leader of RIOT." Nemesis, in traditional Arab garments, is "the saboteur." His comic strip begins, "Through strife torn nations of the Middle East goes Nemesis. Wherever Nemesis goes bloodshed and chaos soon follow. For Nemesis serves no cause but that of RIOT—and RIOT thrives on turmoil!"

The final panels of both RIOT and Eagle Force comic strips show a drawing of a weapon and give a brief but fairly detailed description. For instance, Nemesis' weapon is the Dragunov Sniper Rifle, "or SVD rifle [which] is made in the Soviet Union. It is the sniper version of the AK-47 rifle and comes with a four-power telescopic sight." The description goes on to give the caliber, weight, length, effective range, action and magazine capacity.

Mego tries to appeal to all ethnic groups by including them in the proud Eagle Force team. The problem is that these characters are stereotypical, if not altogether racist. The black figure is called Big Bro'. He uses his skills as a quarterback to throw grenades and dodge the enemy. Kayo is the Oriental Eagle Force member who, as you might guess, uses karate to win his war. An American Indian figure gets along just fine with his bow and arrows. And Wild Bill, the cowboy commando, uses his six-guns.

It's Wild Bill who rides off into the sunset on a camel after shooting the Arab terrorists and saving the world from Communism.

Shan Takahashi is a pen name for a journalist who writes on the toy industry.

